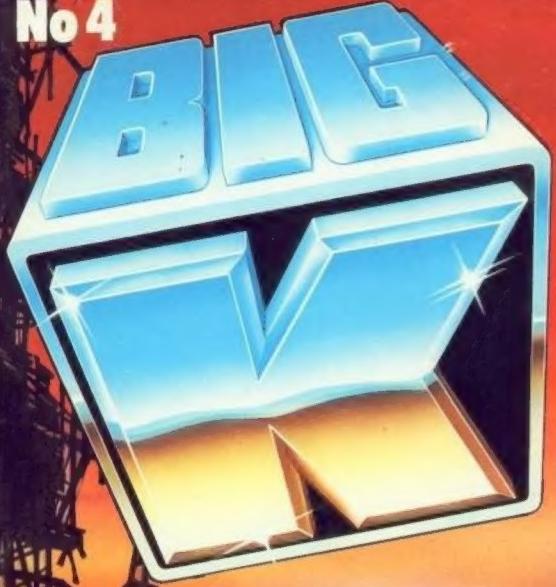


No 4



JULY 1984 85p

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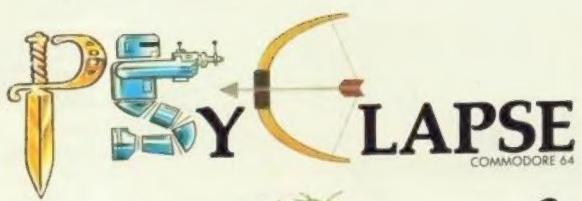
## SPECTRUM AND ATARI GRAPHICS

### WIN AN M5 COMPUTER

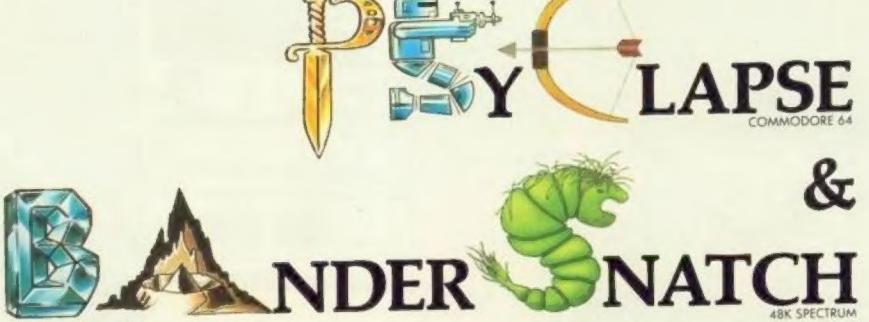


NEWS  
REVIEWS  
GAMES PROGS

MERSEY BYTE!  
The Computer Knives Are Out!



COMMODORE 64



# SUPERPUTERS OFF TO SHAKY START

AS THE MSX threat looms ever nearer in the "affordable" home computer market, manufacturers in Britain and the USA could just be facing a dodgy autumn — if not a winter of discontent — according to informed industry sources.

Of the Brit super-computers, the Sinclair QL is now up and running — and attracting excellent reviews despite the lash-up with the "dongle" that attended its real-time (as opposed to promised) launch date. However the bad feeling that grew up as a result of late delivery has not gone away;

while the irritation over the large sums of money freely available (at zero interest) to Sinclair throughout the waiting period has now materialised into active consumerist aggravation.

Enterprise (né Elan, né Flan) is still booked to appear next month — after delays caused by problems with the dedicated video chip. These delays are widely seen as having affected Enterprise's chances short-term — though if the machine lives up to its specifications it could still attract a

sizeable user base.

Of the British White Hopes, only the Amstrad CPC 464 all-in-one machine, with its superstar BASIC and other goodies, has actually appeared on time and as promised.

The American Coleco Adam, launched in 1983 (though not delivered until early summer 1984) has been dogged by scratchy reviews and poor sales (especially in the USA, where it counts), and rumours are now rife of its pending withdrawal from the market. Ailing giant Atari have still failed to

make substantial inroads into the UK market with their XL series, and are now more than ever committed to the Atari-Soft project (targeted on British computers like Spectrum and US rivals like Commodore).

Meanwhile the standardisation of operating systems inherent in the Microsoft-Japanese MSX project promises to rationalise the domestic computer scene — say some — in such a way as to leave very little room for home-grown competition. We'll keep you posted.



## WHO'S DA MUG, MUGSY?

MY NAME is Friday. I'm a cop. Things had been pretty quiet that day, just the usual crop of homicides and muggings. Then the call came — the guys at BIG K had problems. I rushed over to their office. They were right.

A couple of criminal-looking types had taken over the joint. By their clothes they looked like ageing ex-members of the cast of "Bugsy". Fedoras, spats, shades, the works. They carried violin cases but sure didn't look like budding Stefan Grappellis.

One lounged by the window. "Nice piece a' glass ja got here, fellas. Real shame if sumthin' happened to it — long way down, too. Ain't dat right, Joey?" His partner grunted agreement and reached for his violin case.

My hand gripped my heater. The case opened. Inside there was no rod, no violin, just dozens of copies of a game called Mugsy.

"Da Boss Lady wants yuh should revoo dis suppolo noo Spectrum game. An' she wants you should say nice things about it, dig?" So saying the creep forced a cassette onto the cowering BIG K staff. "Mugsy is da name," he spat. "It's noo an' it's neat an' we don't wanna haveta come back an' tell yuh about it again, geddit?"

I summed up the situation instantly. It was the Melbourne House Mob, already wanted for countless crimes against good taste. Seems the Boss Lady had a new game she wanted people to know about and had hired these two gunslugs to put the pressure on the press, something that nobody but nobody gets away with. I took them downtown for booking. The game stayed at BIG K. They might even review it — voluntarily.

There are eight million tales of Software Intimidation — this has been one of them.

## ZAPPING ON THE RATES

HOT ON THE HEELS of that Tour of the Universe (see page 75) comes news of a high-tech Theme Park on the rates!

One as-yet-unnamed county council in the north of England has employed a firm of leisure consultants to find out just what they could put in such a park. Computerised simulators and laser-disk games that you walk through(!) are high on the list of possibles. A bank of arcade games two acres in size is also mooted. It would take every game as it came onto the market.

The park might also function as a museum for great computers and games that you have loved. "Secret games experiences crafted by electronic leisure specialists," are also promised, whatever these are.

When BIG K can pin down which council can afford such splendour we'll let you know . . .

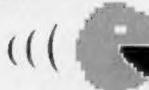
Smash the cuts, OK?



Who's this? M. SMITH completing the 964th screen of *Positively Obsessive Miner III*? No, just one of the EVIL DEAD, celebrating the release of the Palace Software game of the same name on CBM 64.



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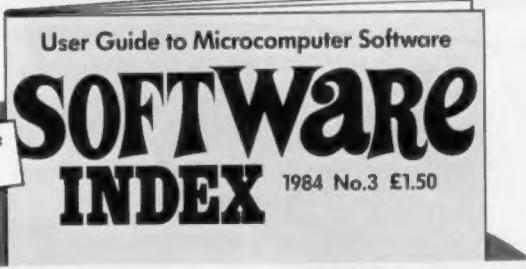
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# NO REGRETS, SAY ATARI AT NEW GAMES LAUNCH

"THERE WILL be no compromise for the sake of cost." So said Atari International's U.K. Marketing Director of the much commented upon high price of Atari software in the British market. The remark was made at the launch of a new range of Atari computer and video game software in May. Though prices still remained high (compared to most other companies) some movement downwards was noticed on the prices of the new games.

*Millipede* and *Crystal Castles* are the latest arcade hits to appear in the VCS format, at £24.99 and £29.99 respectively. *Oscar's Trash Race*, based on TV's 'Sesame Street', comes in for the nippies at £19.99.

*Millipede* also appears — as a ROM cart for the Home Computer System, along with *Moon Patrol* — £24.99 each.

The second wave of Atarisoft releases brings more arcade classics to major micros.

*Pole Position* appears in cassette-based versions for Spectrum 48K and BBC at £14.99 each and as a ROM for the Commodore 64, £24.99. *Robotron: 2084* comes in Spectrum 48K, BBC and Electron editions at £9.99 each, with *Ms Pac-Man* in Beeb and Electron formats at £12.99.

*Dig Dug* is available in the BBC version now and should hit the Electron market next month, both £9.99. That just leaves *Donkey Kong Jr.* swinging onto the Spectrum 48K at £14.99.

## CHEAPO SOFTWARE MAKERS WORRIED

(Overheard on a 'crossed line')

**SOFTWARE HOUSE BIG SHOT:** ... -ing terrible! What really gets up my nose is we wanted to do it first.

**2ND SOFTWARE HOUSE BIG SHOT:** Yeah, I know. All those whingeing wal-lies —

**SHBS:** — Backstreet no-hoppers —

**SHBS (2):** ... Complaining and forcing your prices back up.

**SHBS:** Now these Mastertronic —

**SHBS(2):** Mastertronic, you mean.

**SHBS:** Yeah. Cleaning up like we could've. Under two quid a copy and they shifted over 200,000 units in the first month.

**SHBS (2):** Makes you want to weep.

**SHBS:** Yeah, then along comes Atlantis or whatever they're called ...

**SHBS (2):** Atlantic Software. They're well in too, I hear.

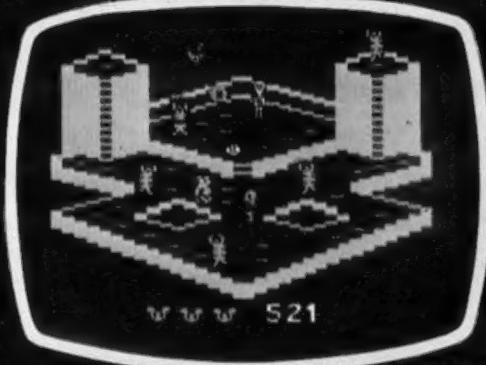
**SHBS:** I hate them. Anyone would think the punters really wanted cheap software ... did you say something?

**SHBS (2):** Me? No.

**SHBS:** Must be something wrong with the line.

**SHBS (2):** 'Ere! You don't think ...

(end of tape)



Atarisoft's Crystal Castles

## GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT

by The Shadow

WHICH MAJOR Liverpool software house executive had his house raided earlier this year by CID types looking for dodgy tapes... And which CID force was acting on "information received" from another (rival) major Liverpool software house? ... Great town, Liverpool... **The Shadow** knows all, for he walks by night...

Totally Uninteresting Fact No. 74: while many major companies would like to look down on the mighty IBM, **The Shadow**'s colleagues at Big K actually do! Physically, that is; the mag's lofty eyrie above London's South Bank gives them a *Defender*'s eye view of neighbouring Big Blue offices ... Get your hand off, sir! ... **The Shadow** sees all, for he flies by day...

Congrats to BIG K's Steve Keaton, who conquered his social terrors and his inborn lust for alcohol for long enough to qualify as a *Pole Position* prizewinner (3rd place, actually) at a recent **Atari** trash to launch new games ... Despite being pipped by two other hacks, Keaton complaineth not, since his prize was a slow but functioning (and

totally safe) **Atari Digital Clock**, while the unlucky first prizewinner now finds himself committed to a trial circuit of Silverstone ... Hello, **Rajeev Sood**, consumer extraordinaire. Department of Unhappy Coincidences: even while an **Atari** big-wig was being publicly and cheerfully optimistic about the future of the dedicated video-game machine (you know, those things without keyboards), another nail was being driven into the coffin of the ailing format by **Virgin Games Centre's** announcement that no longer will they (largest retail operation in London) sell said systems ... It's a tough old world...

Congrats to **Silversoft** for a dazzling, witty (it says here) new concept: in *Worse Things Happen At Sea* (Spectrum 48K) you have to keep a cargo ship going while leaks spring, etc. Nice graphics, good plot line — but the best touch is that the cargo consists of packing cases clearly labelled **QL**. Do **Silversoft** know something **The Shadow** doesn't? ... Course not...

Logging off...

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## The Game: ACORN NIXED BY BEEB LINK?

AFTER THE BBC micro, Acorn are now hotly tipped to supply a games machine for The Game, Yorkshire TV's interactive computer game quiz-show first exclusively reported three months ago in *Big K*.

But it now appears unlikely that Acorn will produce their Business Machine (the ABM) in time to fit the bill.

Insiders say that Yorkshire TV must first face the wrath of the Independent Broadcasting Authority — who vetoed an ITV micro when the idea first came up last November. And then there's the sticky point of the Acorn TV "monopoly".

New firm Data Technologies can make the BBC micro think like an IBM PC — it's called The Graduate. For £600 (or £869 mail-order) you can use the PC's version of the MS-DOS operating system along with the BBC O/S.

A licensing deal means that Acorn will both sell and support The Graduate. A cut-down version for the Acorn Electron will make the latter the cheapest IBM PC clone on the market — for under £1,000 all-told. And this is just the machine that YTV want, with the proviso that a modem can be squeezed in the same box without taking the price over £1,000.

Yorkshire TV want to clash in on all those BBC micros out in the market and Acorn are keen to help. All they need now is a nod from the IBA.

## FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

A COMMUNIST microcomputer called Agatha is good news for Apple II users — but bad news for the corporation itself. Agatha will be the star of Moscow's first Computer Fair to be held next month.

The Soviet Union has previewed a version of the Apple II, called something which translates as "Agatha", but which is allegedly many times faster. That's because it employs high-speed versions of the basic 6502 chip called 65C02, C standing for the advanced CMOS process of making the chips.

But that's not all. The entire East Bloc is to cooperate on a research plan to build the next generation

BY THIS TIME next year, as many as one in three computer owners may possess a disc drive or some similar form of fast-access mass storage.

And in recognition of this growing trend, more and more games producers are now putting their eggs in the disc-drive basket.

Acornsoft, of course, have for long made their games software available on both disc and cassette, reflecting the vast choice of disc systems (Acorn's own, Torch, Cumana, etc.) for the Model B machine. The huge popularity of the Commodore 64 has also stimulated demand for CBM's own rather slow disc system — as recognised by K-Tel, who are now firmly dedicated to Commodore discs (while continuing to issue on cassette interim) and several other companies.

In the USA, where disc drives cost (relatively) less, cassette systems are considered primitive,

## NO DISC? THEN YOU'RE A WALLY!

first-user-only devices; and it is from the US experience (4 out of 5 computer owners apparently on disc) that British companies are now moving across to the superior — but far more expensive —

"We firmly believe that disc drives are the coming thing, certainly long-term — and we intend to be seen as a long-term operation", a K-Tel spokesman told BIG K. The company's philosophy is that, once a computer owner has bought his machine, his next major purchase will be a disc system — "and we want to be there ready and waiting".

In addition to the high-speed loading and saving time associated with discs, other advantages are that the large amounts of storage possible can effectively increase the "virtual RAM" of a machine. This is particularly true of adventures — still the fastest-growing type of game in overall

popularity terms — where at any given location the next stage of a long program (too big to be stored in RAM) can be auto-booted, with special variables being transferred from one stage of the program to the next.

Joker in the disc pack is of course Sinclair, whose compact and now proven Microdrive system is nearly as fast as most discs, and considerably less expensive. Another problem for the UK hardware men is that while casings, etc., are manufactured here, most disc innards are imported from — you guessed it — Japan. A third poser is the combat currently being waged between the standard 5 1/4" floppy size, and the new micro-discs made by Sony (3 1/2") and Hitachi (3") — both of which can almost match the larger disc sizes in storage capability and access time.

A new format war? We'll keep you posted...

## LETTER FROM MOSCOW By Our Special Correspondent

I am writing to give you update on progress with our own computers. As you are painfully aware, Comrades, the imperialistic capitalists, with their "Free Trade" (Hail) refuse to sell us any of their devices, and so we devise better ones!

Old Doktor Pavlov is still with us (he's around 130 now, I am told, and still on the same antifreeze we gave B.) and he's working on a revolutionary transmission system.

Is a line of lobotomised dogs, each holding tail of next dog between teeth. Comrade Doktor has trained them to close their mouths whenever tails are squeezed. So you squeeze tail of first dog, pulse travels down to last dog at speed of bite. Amazing.

Progress on miniaturisation goes slowly. Our Tesla Coil technology does not lend itself to such indignities. The research team has experience grave problems with crosstalk, and one even dared to blame our great Tesla Coil itself, saying that the use of 11,000 Volts to signify a 1 was "excessive". As he was obviously demented, poor fellow, we sacked him. (Then threw the sack in the Volkga).

Still, comrades, some things move very fast indeed. RNSI, the Russian National Standards Institute have agreed a code called RSCII (pronounced "Ruski"), And RusChip, the state manufacturers of highly technological equipment have brought out their RCZ80 "Molotov" and RC6502 "Karlov" processors in an amazing ten days after work was started! Design team has been awarded Order of Lenin, but for some technical reason new chips are in very short supply.

Anyhow, we were very interested and a little concerned with the ZX80 you sent to us last week. It outperformed our business models by a factor of 10 (and so much memory!), so now we're fitting it into the next SS series missiles. I understand Sir Sinclair bringing out new machine .. . Send round the boys and take all he's got. Tell him to invent some story about bugs in design holding up production.

Also find enclosed one case Vodka. Remember Dotechvesky? When he got sent to Siberia for eating crisps during the '76 May Day parade? Haahaa! He managed to become big shot in the spirits industry down there and is sending freebies to everyone who's anyone. The boys at Volgograd know how it feels to be so far from home among the savages and so rustled up a case for you.

Send new Sinclair equipment soon. Don't forget to use the Series X16 30ft by 30ft Diplomatic Bag!

Yours ever,

*Boris*

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All could go well but when he gets a mal-function he must send a pilotless shuttle to obtain spares and take-off before the Moronian's bomb detonates.

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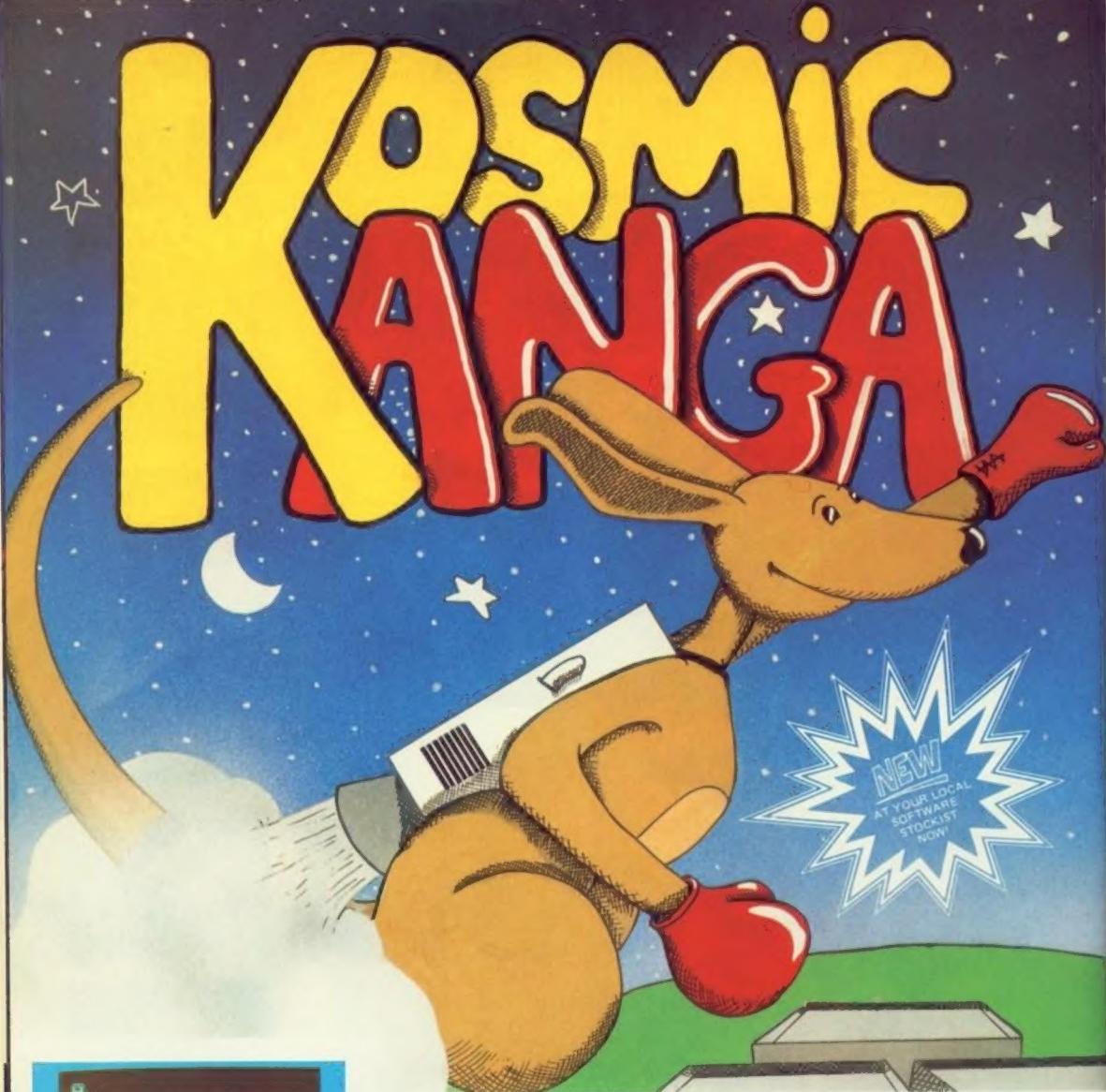
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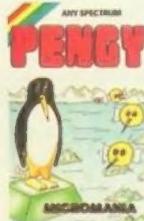
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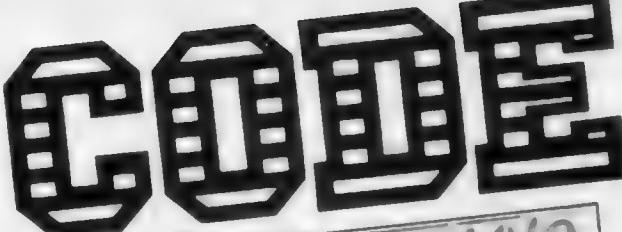
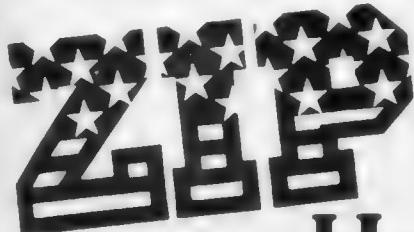
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# How Hawkeye fixed Atari's liver...

WERE IT not for the Korean War, Atari might be out of business today.

Follow closely: because of his involvement as a front-line medic, a doctor wrote a fictionalized account of his Korean experiences. Whereas his book wasn't exactly a blockbuster, it did become a very, very successful movie.

In turn, the movie begat an even more successful television series.

The series was M\*A\*S\*H, and it turned Alan Alda into America's biggest and most trusted star.

Throughout M\*A\*S\*H's eleven year run, Alan decided to exploit his trust by succumbing to product endorsements, other than for his own motion pictures. But about a nanosecond after abandoning M\*A\*S\*H — i.e., last summer — Alda signed a lucrative contract, selling his considerable credibility to Warner Communications for use in saving Atari's skin.

## DETERIORATION

For Atari was in deep trouble. The company lost \$539 million and laid off over 2,500 employees last year. Then they managed to pull off the near impossible: they actually lost a fortune on merchandising items based upon the movies *E.T.* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Of course, they were losing money on lots of other game carts as well.

Faced with competition from Coleco, sales of the 2600 were in a deep slump

and retailers were closing out units at about \$50.00 (£35.00). Their all-new Atari 5200 proved to be an initial disappointment — it had a tough joystick, a limited software catalogue, and its games were no better than those made for the Atari 400. But the 400 was also in the bargain-basement bins, selling for about one hundred dollars less than the 5200. With Commodore selling their 64s by the truckload and Coleco's forthcoming Adam looking like the Volksmicro, Atari had to find the future — and then find a way to sell that future to a doubtful public.

## TRANSFUSION

Hence Alan Alda. Mr. Credibility, Mr. Honesty. And, as far as television was concerned, a commercial virgin. Atari dumped its fledgling line of new computers (the 1200, the 1400, and the 1450) and concentrated on two new machines: the 600 and a new 800. These micros were everything the previous Atari machines were not: they were well designed, very family oriented, extremely useful, and played games like nobody's business. Most important, they used the software already written for the 400 and the 800. And with Alda's clever commercials behind them, they quickly became the computers for families that couldn't afford Apples or IBMs. Most families, in other words.

Atari also cleaned house.

Photo: 20th Century Fox



They hired a new boss, James Morgan, who made a lot of extremely smart moves.

After straightening the company's chaotic management structure, Morgan put a lid on new product announcements. Henceforth, Atari was no longer in the business of getting gamers excited about stuff they would never see.

That's smart, because as a gamer/reporter, I myself am still waiting on Atari's 3-D game system and on their wireless 2600. I played prototypes of both, of course; but it is much easier to make a prototype of something than it is to make a marketable production model. Just ask Coleco.

## POST OP

Atari's got something between seven and ten million 2600s still operating in American homes, so there will be a market for their game software for quite some time. The 5200 has finally taken off with a great deal of top-notch software support: Atari has taken a lot of Intellivision and Coleco gamers and brought them back into the Atari fold.

Their future lies in the success of the new micros — if Atari blows it, they won't get

a second chance. The field is simply too competitive.

Atari isn't out of the water yet, but at least they can sight land.

## STATESIDE CHATTER...

★ Commodore's alleged 264 and 364 might not make it — the former was unveiled at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show to a lot of head-scratching and general befuddlement; many folks think it is inferior to the original Commodore 64. As of this writing, retailers have seen neither hide nor hair of the 364. If Commodore is going to stay in the low-end micro market, they're going to have to come up with something, and it better play games, and it better be good.

★ Coleco announced an Adam discdrive — now we'll have to see if they can deliver. Of course, they just laid off 1,300 workers after posting a \$35 million loss for the last three months of 1983. Someday they'll learn the lesson: you can't produce an adequate number of good games for several semi-compatible systems (the Coleco, the driving module, the sports module, the roller controller, and the Adam).

More next month.

# DUEL!

# for COMMODORE 64 by JONATHAN BULL

**On with  
your helm,  
your tunic,  
your trusty  
sword. The  
foes await  
outside the  
castle. But hold,  
strange sorcery  
has been at work.  
The laws of time  
and space have  
been distorted  
bringing warriors  
from different time  
zones to your door. No  
matter, there is battle to  
be done!**





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440 SF INT "SIGHT"  
450 SF INT 73 1 2 3 4 5 6  
460 SF INT 73 1 2 3 4 5 6

EDD 001-1 CIRCUIT BREAKER SYSTEM  
EDD 001-2 CIRCUIT BREAKER SYSTEM  
EDD 001-3 CIRCUIT BREAKER SYSTEM  
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EDD 001-20 CIRCUIT BREAKER SYSTEM

# charts

SP Spectrum, AC Acorn, 64 Commodore 64.

key

V20 Vic 20, 81 ZX 81, DR Dragon 32, OR Oric-1

**TOP 30 GAMES** (Retail)

- 1 JET SET WILLY
- 2 FIGHTER PILOT
- 3 ATIC ATAC
- 4 MANIC MINER
- 5 CHEQUERED FLAG
- 6 HUNCHBACK
- 7 BLUE THUNDER
- 8 SCUBA DIVE
- 9 POGO
- 10 ANT ATTACK
- 11 LUNAR JETMAN
- 12 FRED
- 13 NIGHT GUNNER
- 14 FLIGHT SIMULATION
- 15 CODE NAME MAT
- 16 ZAXXAN
- 17 REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CAMELS
- 18 SNOOKER
- 19 THE HOBBIT
- 20 WHEELIE
- 21 CHINESE JUGGLER
- 22 POOL
- 23 THE SNOWMAN
- 24 SPACE SHUTTLE
- 25 TRASHMAN
- 26 THE ALCHEMIST
- 27 TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY
- 28 BUGABOO
- 29 DEFENDA
- 30 STONKERS

	SP	AC	64	V20	81	DR	OR	Price
JET SET WILLY	Software Projects	-						£5.95
FIGHTER PILOT	Digital Integration	-						£7.95
ATIC ATAC	Ultimate	-						£5.50
MANIC MINER	Software Projects	-			-			£7.95
CHEQUERED FLAG	Psion	-						£6.95
HUNCHBACK	Ocean	-						£6.90
BLUE THUNDER	Richard Wilcox	-						£5.95
SCUBA DIVE	Durell	-		-				£6.95
POGO	Ocean	-						£5.90
ANT ATTACK	Quicksilva	-						£6.95
LUNAR JETMAN	Ultimate	-						£5.50
FRED	Quicksilva	-						£6.95
NIGHT GUNNER	Digital Integration	-						£6.95
FLIGHT SIMULATION	Psion	-						£7.95
CODE NAME MAT	Micromega	-						£6.95
ZAXXAN	Starzone	-						£5.95
REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CAMELS	Llamasoft	-			-			£7.50
SNOOKER	Visions	-	-	-				£8.95
THE HOBBIT	Melbourne House	-	-	-		-		£14.95
WHEELIE	Microsphere	-						£5.95
CHINESE JUGGLER	Ocean	-						£6.90
POOL	CDS	-						£5.95
THE SNOWMAN	Quicksilva	-						£6.95
SPACE SHUTTLE	Microdeal	-	-	-		-		£8.00
TRASHMAN	New Generation	-						£5.95
THE ALCHEMIST	Imagine	-						£5.50
TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY	Bug-Byte	-	-	-				£5.95
BUGABOO	Quicksilva	-						£7.95
DEFENDA	Interstellar	-						£5.95
STONKERS	Imagine	-						£5.50

Compiled by MRIB Computer.

**VIDEO GAMES** (Dedicated Consoles)

- (1) POLE POSITION (Atari)
- (2) SPACE SHUTTLE (Activision)
- (3) SUPER COBRA (Parker)
- (4) PITFALL 2 (Activision)
- (5) MARIO BROTHERS (Atari)
- (6) POPEYE (Parker)
- (7) (25) MS PAC-MAN (Atari)
- (8) ENDURO (Activision)
- (9) (7) DEATH STAR BATTLE (Parker)
- (10) (6) Q-BERT (Parker)
- (11) (10) FROSTBITE (Activision)
- (12) (19) GALAXIAN (Atari)
- (13) (—) PHOENIX (Atari)
- (14) (12) BATTLE ZONE (Atari)
- (15) (11) FRDGGER (Parker)
- (16) (14) DONKEY KONG (CBS/Coleco)
- (17) (13) SNOOPY VS THE RED BARON (Atari)
- (18) (9) DIG DUG (Atari)
- (19) (10) MOON PATROL (Atari)
- (20) (15) PITFALL (Activision)
- (21) (21) PAC-MAN (Atari)
- (22) (18) BIG BIRD EGG CATCH (Atari)
- (23) (16) RIVER RAID (Activision)
- (24) (17) TUTANKHAM (Parker)
- (25) (24) COOKIE MONSTER MUNCH (Atari)
- (26) (29) SPACE INVADERS (Atari)
- (27) (20) JUNGLE HUNT (Atari)
- (28) (27) CENTIPEDE (Atari)
- (29) (22) SMURFS (CBS/Coleco)
- (30) (30) ROBOT TANK (Activision)

Compiled by MRIB Computer.

also selling well  
in mail order...

- ATIC ATAC (Ultimate)
- BUMPING BUGGIES (Bubble Bus)
- CHUCK-E-EGG (A&F Software)
- COLDITZ (Phipps Associates)
- CYDONIA ATTACK (A&F Software)
- FIGHTER PILOT (Digital Integration)

- FLIGHT PATH (Anirog)
- THE FOREST (Phipps Associates)
- FLYING FEATHERS (Bubble Bus)

- JET PAC (Ultimate)
- KRAKATOA (Abbex)
- MEGAWARZ (Paramount)

- NIGHT RUNNER (Digital Integration)
- OUTBACK (Paramount)
- PILOT 64 (Abbex)
- RALLY SPEEDWAY (Aventure International)
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To date, Atari's most astonishing game is Pole Position... If you are only going to buy one game, then this is the one you should get.

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...Pole Position gives a very strong sense of speed as you hurtle round the track. The super-realism of the three-dimensional effect adds a lot to the game. It is a great graphics demo.

PRACTICAL COMPUTING.

Brilliant!

WHICH MICRO? AND SOFTWARE REVIEW.

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Exciting, exhilarating, excellent, Pole Position takes the lead as the best Atari race game around.

PERSONAL COMPUTER NEWS.

## What can we say?



We're overwhelmed. Though we should just add that with Atarisoft, you can now play Pole Position<sup>®</sup> on the Commodore 64, BBC and Spectrum computers, as well as on all Atari<sup>®</sup> systems. Oh, and we're giving away free a Grand Prix kit and full colour wall chart with every game.

**POLE POSITION**  
*from ATARISOFT<sup>®</sup>*

St Johns  
Beacon  
Imagine  
wanted it but  
the council  
drove too hard  
a bargain

IT MAY seem a long time ago now, but in 1964 there seemed to be quite a lot going for the city of Liverpool

I'm not talking about the city itself. As someone who grew up there I remained convinced that Liverpool was, and most likely still is, a dump of the first magnitude (but we won't go into that). What I'm referring to is the famous explosion of pop (we still called it 'pop') talent, which twenty years ago immediately characterised the 'Pool as a city with a talent for the unexpected — just as everybody else, me included, was writing it off.

These days we find the great and gungy city beside the fair-flowing Mersey (a river with its own very special breed of Goldfish) once more visibly down on its luck. Unemployment, always high, is now critical. The city

council are at loggerheads (not half) with Westminster. By the time you read this Liverpool may be officially bankrupt. It's a gloomy picture.

Except for one small thing. From the smouldering ash-heaps of Liverpool 8 a strange, alien, multicoloured tendril is creeping. And another! And two more! They pulse in glowing electronic waves but are clearly thriving, growing fast. There is an eerie tweeting sound and one can see bundles of banknotes clutched in Venus Fly Trap-like mandibles. The earth begins to vibrate.

No! No! It's... it's Software!

And how

Although there are at least half a dozen games designing operations now under way in Liverpool, this report concentrates on

only the three biggest: the uneasy legs of a single tripod (assuming you like metaphors). They are Bug-Byte, the original Liverpool games company and the wellspring of the other two, Imagine, who need no introduction from me, and the newest of the three, Software Projects, formed out of breakaways from the first two, while the second had itself been formed by people breaking away from the first. There is, in a word, a close causal relationship between the three Merseyside games companies, but despite this, they don't appear to like each other very much. There are dark sayings, and unorthodox doings up there beside the Mersey; and even darker rumours. Yet with all the Borgia-style betrayals and poisoning of each others' soup, there is still a lot to be proud of.

## MERSEY BYTE!

Liverpool — where the echoes of the Mersey Beat sixties have given way to the sound of machine code. TONY TYLER returns to his roots to check out the Big Three in 'Scousersoft'...

## WHEN THE BUG BIT BACK

IN THE beginning there was Bug-Byte

Well, actually, in the *real* beginning there was University College, Oxford, and within those dreamlike portals there was Tony Baden and Tony Milner, reading Chemistry

And lo, on a day the man Baden said to the man Milner, I have an idea, Tone, and the man Milner said, Shoot. Tone; whereby the man Baden said, let us go into the world, you with your Acorn Atom and me with my ZX80 and make a great deal of money, for verily, I have had it to the teeth with the Stinks Lab and these ridiculous gowns.

And the man Milner said, just what I was thinking, Tone; and he spoke the truth.

And on a day these two departed the city of the dreaming spires and went into the world with a total capital of a tenner; whereof they spent £4.50 on a single classified ad in *Computing Today*, and they chose Baden's home town Liverpool as their base, and all was gladness, for the orders came pouring in.

Well, it was more or less like that. The names are true, as is the capital of £10.00, and the Atom and the ZX80 — as was

the fact that in those days (May 1980) Bug-Byte had no duplicating facilities, so that each mail-order requirement meant a SAVE routine.

Throughout their first year Mail Order was the name of the game, with the two roles gradually coalescing into Milner (the programmer) and Baden (the marketing man). Throughout 1981 they took on staff, man by man; and apart from occasional hiccups — almost all of these of a personal rather than product kind — they just grew and grew, like many another software company during the previous two or three years. Their first real hit was *Mazogs* for ZX81 (written by Don Priestly, now with DK'tronics), and — unusually — they were into Utilities quite early on too, with editors / assemblers / disassemblers and the like all available. And *Spectrum Invaders* came along to swell the coffers, as did *Scopetrix*, designed by one Dave Lawson.

UPWARDS AND OUTWARDS Within a year of this they had severely outgrown their original office, so they hight themselves to Canning Place, amonst the docks. Forty-five Big Ones into the fitting out of what was now Liverpool's largest and fastest-growing software house; and at

the same time, bearing in mind all those SAVEs, they inaugurated Spool, their own duplication company. Down came their overheads in a rush, while up went their productivity.

Star programmer Dave Lawson left in July 1982 — rather



Bug Byte's  
Rob Phoenix  
at work

unexpectedly, one gathers. Two months later Mark Butler, another Bug-Byte programmer, had followed Lawson (which puzzled Baden at the time, since in his estimation Butler had harboured unkind thoughts about Lawson); and the first, and greatest of Bug-Byte's rivals had appeared: Imagine Software. At about the same time the bespectacled author of *Panic* departed as well, and in the same direction.

### EXIT THE MINER

Bug-Byte faltered slightly at this sudden loss of talent, but recovered swiftly. By the following April they had yet another potential star working for them on a freelance basis: Matthew Smith. Smith's first effort for Bug-Byte was *Styx*, which all sides admit bombed out. And then Smith produced *Manic Miner*.

enough, I'd like to know what it is."

How was freelancer Smith able to take the Miner with him? Hadn't he signed the old boy away? "There was a clause in our original contract," explained Baden, "which, due to a comma in the wrong place, or a missing comma, can't remember which, was a bit ambiguous. Rather than spend a lot of time and money fighting it in court, we agreed to let him take the game with him. At the time, you see, Matthew was a minor, and our legal people told us that against a minor in open court nobody has a chance."

Baden is "neutral" about the idea of more and more software operations setting up house in Liverpool. He also carefully avoids negative feelings concerning Imagine and SP, as far as he can.



### Miner

More aggro surrounds this game, seemingly, than attends US-Soviet relations. There are claims and counter-claims, all exacerbated by the fact that Matthew Smith has of course now also left Bug-Byte, and is one-third of the newest company, Software Projects. Having taken the rights to *Manic Miner* with him, the same game has now been in the charts under two labels: old and new. This is a unique situation, and has been attended by angry comments from both sides.

"I know what Matthew's been saying, that he didn't get enough from *Manic Miner*," says Baden. "But I can tell you he got £50,000 cash from that one game while we sold it, and if that isn't

The first of all the 'PoolSoft houses has now recovered from the 'Manic Miner' affair, as they have from other affairs, and with Trevor Hall now spearheading their active teams, are continually developing new and high-quality software. At the time of writing, the *Computer Cook book* is being launched — an obvious way to get all those legendary housewives hooked. Imminent: *The Birds and the Bees* (not what you think), and now *Antics*, written by 17-year-old Adrian Sherwin. Bug-Byte have what they call *MegaGames* in the pipeline, chiefly *Star Trader*, which they call an 'ArcVenture'. They "might" support Enterprise and Amstrad ("Depends how they sell it") and will "probably" support the QL

# FERRARI 'CROSS THE MERSEY

IF IMAGINE didn't exist, somebody would have to invent them.

This company has a national — never mind local — image as wide as a barn door. *Flamboyant* is a fair description. They have more than halfway succeeded in making themselves into minor national figures. One of the founder-directors rides a 170 mph superbike and has serious ambitions concerning the Isle of Man TT. Eugene Evans is the boy-wonder programmer even the *Daily Telegraph* has heard of. And, parked all over yellow lines outside the company's business-district offices, is a constantly rotating assort-

work, which on the face of it seems reasonable enough. Imagine have their own so-called *MegaGames* in a secret, near-finished state (on these, more in a moment). They dislike inaccurate press speculation but themselves do little to help. They are surrounded by rumour.

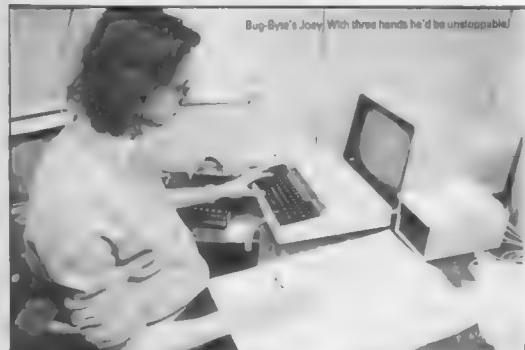
### THE 'A' TEAM

The company was formed slightly less than two years ago by two former Bug-Byte employees, programmers Dave Lawson and Mark Butler. They were shortly afterwards joined by a third, younger Bug-Byte programmer, Eugene Evans, but for unexplained reasons Evans was never invited to sit on the Board and remains a jobbing, if senior, games designer. Since then Imagine have barely looked back. Growth has been staggering — among their many satisfying hits being Evans' own *Arcadia* for Spectrum (and now 64), a ground-based shoot-'em-down with undeniably classic overtones. It has sold hundreds of thousands of copies.

There are more recent hits. Ian Weatherburn's *Alchemist* is a remarkable and again definitive piece of work, an 'ArcVenture' with nifty subroutines and a killing pace. And John Gibson, oldest of Imagine's 'A Team', has recently produced a classy miniaturised strategic wargame, *Stonkers*. The upcoming *MegaGames* ("We've found a way of very considerably enhancing the power of the personal computer" — Bruce Evers) are code-named *Psyclapse* and *Bandersnatch*.

### OPEN SPACES

Their offices — formerly of an Arab shipping line — are immense; the only possible word. Seemingly hundreds of feet apart — a stiff walk away — sit the programmers in teams of



Bug-Byte's Joey. With three hands he'd be unstoppable!

### SECRETIVE

They are also (to use an old hippy word) *misterioso*. By which I mean there's a lot of "No, you can't point a camera over there" and "You mustn't go in that room". Fiddling idly (but closely supervised) with a Macintosh, your reporter accidentally accessed a menu and felt very strongly that he was within a nanosecond of getting his fingers rapped. Stern notices inhabit the walls ("These machines have been put here by Dave Lawson and MUST NOT BE TOUCHED"). Getting into Imagine is also not easy, due to the electronic security system.

This is all to protect their

Anonymous  
Imagine  
programmer



Imagine's in-house orchestra

two, say, Evans and a junior hacker, each with a nest desk, a Sage IV, a couple of monitors and a Commodore 64. Many of the offices have glass walls.

## BIKER, THE RAT & JR

Today, as on many days, Mark Butler is dressed for biking: leather jacket, scarf, chunky boots, as is fellow-director Ian Hetherington, the only one of the juntas of four to refuse to appear on the TV cameras (Channel 4 are present, making a film). Operations Director Bruce Everiss wears (was probably born wearing) suit and tie. Dave Law-

son — according to Butler the man 'who made it all happen' — is small and neat and moustached like Kenneth Grahame's Water Rat, and speaks so quietly people lean in from either side to hear him talk.

During their TV interview these three, Lawson, Everiss and Butler, reinforce their company's image again and again —

Imagine don't see new Silicon Valleys springing up all over Merseyside. The latest of their run-ins with the Labour council has, it must be admitted, its farcical side. Apparently Imagine approached Derek Hatton and his Militant boys with a view to leasing the now-defunct revolving restaurant atop St George's Beacon, which is the 'Pool's



optimistic about the future, overconfident about their own fortunes, scathing about Liverpool City Council (you didn't hear this bit on TV).

Imagine don't get on too well with the Council, who, they say, positively discourage new investment; which is why

equivalent of the Post Office Tower. There were even plans, it is said, to display the Imagine logo from on high in the form of a giant neon sign.

The Council said, OK, give us a piece of the action and we'll oblige.

What, said Imagine. Do you mean a proportion of our company profits?

Too right, said the Council. A large portion.

Forget it, said Imagine. And they have.

Imagine's directors know they are not well liked within the Liverpool software ghetto. Nor do they give a toss, one gathers. They show no mercy and ask none. One of the more extraordinary of their actions took place shortly before this article was written, when the company not only bugged a senior employee they suspected of preparing to defect, but also actually released a transcript of an alleged treasonous conversation and published it as a broadsheet given away free with the normal monthly issue of a trade magazine. (The magazine owners caught on after 30,000 issues had been printed and pulled the plug.) The bugged employee has since left and now works for Software Projects — though Imagine itself, remember, was formed by former Bug-Byte men who also defected at a critical and (for the host company) highly inconvenient moment. It's not all fun and games and multi-coloured character sets, up there in Liverpool.

# TALES OF THE MANIC MINOR

AND THEN there was Boltman Projects...

This time the ancestry is even more muddled.

Matthew Smith, we know about. Then there was Alan Merton, former Dispatch Manager with — you guessed it — Bug-Byte, and there was another executive, Colin Rivers, who was working at the time for Imagine, a British spin-off of Bug-Byte.

Merton was 'not too happy' at Bug-Byte at about this time last year, he remembers. Restless and — he felt — under-employed, he cast around for a new bolt.

At the same time or slightly later Matthew Smith, a Bug-Byte (Bolton) programmer, began to think himself under-valued, and also began feeling restless.

A businessperson slightly known to Merton, had a sum who was keen on the computer stuff. After a meander discussion, in which Merton opened the man's eyes with visions of glory and dollars, the wealthy fellow offered Merton a partnership; which he at first refused, then accepted — on condition that Matthew Smith be made the third partner. Smith duly

assumed, may be with Bug-Byte UK (as in these cases rather suddenly), and the following Monday Software Projects was in existence, with an address in the pleasant middle-class suburb of Waverton. Paul McCartney's old manor.

In addition to bringing the rights to the game *Manic Miner* with him from Bug-Byte, Smith, after a longish delay, finally published another masterpiece, *Jet Set Willy*, a fast and colourful game. Two months above all for the future quality of its educational products, its chart showings (as good as you can get) have immediately established the third Liverpool software house as a rival to every sense to its big brothers. The company could hardly have enjoyed a better start.

Two months ago (at time of writing) *The Trade* (that's us, and them, but not you) tested with enthusiasm when Imagine circulated the script of an alleged phone conversation involving their employee Colin Stokes, a senior sales exec. It seems that, suspecting him of dishonesty, they had tapped his telephone.

To save everybody trouble

ourselves, included we won't repeat the allegations made by both sides, let's just record that Stokes deserted Imagine forthwith, amid a sea of lawyers letters, and William, a soufflé of sceptics, as it turned, had joined Software Projects.

Though none of the SP personnel actually live in Liverpool, Merton is ecstatic about the city, boasting, of all people, Carl Jung: "Liverpool is the Pearl of Life . . . He has nothing against any other company and remains a personal friend of Tomy Miller, co-founder of Bug-Byte.

The company is TRS-80 based, following Smith's own route into computers (they actually use the big Model 3). Smith, according to Merton, is a brilliant but sometimes whimsical perfectionist.

Because of the necessary lead time of artwork and packaging over the actual software, the game needs time to be written before the game is shipped (assuming it is to be marketed as soon as possible). And Smith's habit of changing quite important aspects even at the last moment can put these dates out of date. Though *Manic Miner* was in fact written in 12 weeks! "Matt" then uses his intelligence wisely — he's a good all-rounder as well," says Merton. Even before joining Bug-Byte at 17, Matthew Smith had been running his own company (with his mother as Managing Director), writing and selling small business picks for the TRS-80.

Those were the days. What do we have now?



# the LLAMA has LANDED!

...and it's breeding fast.

Once upon a time, only Commodore owners could experience the thrill of playing an original game by Jeff 'Awesome' Minter. Lesser mortals could only sit and stare in wonderous rapture at the fury arcade action brought to you by Llamasoft

BUT NOW THERE IS HOPE.

Dragon owners were the first to see the light of day, but now Salamander Software is pleased to punch to announce that selected titles

**ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR THE 48K SPECTRUM.**

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## METAGALACTIC LLAMAS BATTLE AT THE EDGE OF TIME

On a forlorn observation post at the edge of the galaxy, the Metallamas wait for a sign of Zzyaxian spaceships. Suddenly the alarm claxons blare, and the furry friends of freedom rush to the fore only to find that there are no attacking spaceships, and that they are under attack from Cyborg Arachnid Mutants and Disgusting Weeviloids...

This classic arcade game, originally developed by Jeff 'Awesome' Minter of Llamasoft, features 1 and 2 player options, spitting Llamas, Cyborg Arachnid Mutants, Disgusting Weeviloids, 99 levels of play, joystick recommended. Supports Spectrum ZX Interface 2 and Kempston joysticks.

## MATRIX: GRIDRUNNER II

It is ten years after the infamous Grid Wars, and humanity is once again threatened by the evil droids, only this time they're back in force with new weapons and new allies.

The awesome sequel to the best selling Gridrunner, Matrix features all the old favourites like Droids and Zappers, but increases the panic quotient by adding Diagonal waves, Cosmic Cameloids, Energy deflexors, the Snitch and more.

Game originally developed by Jeff 'Awesome' Minter of Llamasoft. Joystick recommended. Supports Kempston and AGF joystick interfaces.

In space, only the camels can hear you scream.

## What some famous people have said ...

"What's an arcade game"

Aristotle

"Awesome"

Jeff Minter

"I prefer elephants"

Hannibal

"Don't shoot me, I'm only the piano player"

Elton John

"Boing"

Zebedee



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HE WROTE ONE...

# MAN IN THE CROWD

LIKE HIS CONTEMPORARIES of the sixties, Liverpool-based Mike Singleton has turned his back on the Scouse House in favour of the bright lights of London-based Beyond Software. Through them he has unleashed his 'Epic' fantasy game *The Lords of Midnight*.

Mike has a dictionary. He has looked up the word epic. "It describes crucial events in the history of a nation," he says. Well, that's part of it. In BIG K's dictionary it means something on a pretty large scale — and that just about sums up Mike's approach to writing computer games.

Mike started off in a 'small' way with *StarLord*, a play-by-mail game that just grew and grew. After the 500th player had joined the game Mike decided that it was time to give up his teaching job to concentrate on running *StarLord*, along with a few other projects he had in mind.

## CROWD SCENES

But like a Sir Richard Attenborough of the software world Mike is capable of things other than heavy crowd scenes. He's had his moments with the odd arcade style game or two. *Snake Pit*, *Shadowfax*, *3 Deep Space* (the one that made your eyes go funny) are all his. Now he's going for the Big One.

*The Lords of Midnight* is difficult to tag. Beyond Software seem overly fond of the term 'Epic' when describing it. More accurately it could be termed an interactive multi-player computer game utilising adventure and wargaming themes (mmm, maybe 'Epic' is a little shorter). It can be played as a traditional quest, a tactical wargame or a generally impressive trip through some advanced computer graphics.



**Singleton by name but not by nature. MIKE SINGLETON, master of the multi-player game, is the man behind those enigmatic ads — "Who Are The Lords of Midnight?" RICHARD BURTON talks to another scion of the Liverpool software boom.**

It is these graphics that are a key to the whole game. Mike has come up with a process he calls 'landscaping' which, every time you move, will redraw the landscape around you in proper perspective, making any changes necessary. As you move forward distant peaks will resolve into mountain ranges, with for-

ests and castles if need be. Lakes, frozen wastes, villages, citadels, armies and other elements can be added or taken away as required — all are random. Beyond claim a staggering total of 32,000 different locations for the game.

This is important because the player views the scene through the eyes of the main character, Luxor, and three others (as well as a possible 32 others, but that's another story). Each can be in a different part of the Land of Midnight thus giving an ever-changing number of view points.

Game objective, very simply, is to defeat the evil Doomdark, played by the computer (gimme a hiss, gimme a boo). You are the hero, Luxor the Moonprince, Lord of the Free (gimme a yay, gimme a rah) and, by virtue of the Moon Ring, you can control other characters that

are loyal to you. You can move them through the realm of Midnight and see through their eyes. Some are individuals, some commanders of armies — you get the army thrown in.

There are two methods of offing Doomdark and his hordes: the wargaming method of sending armies to capture his citadel or the adventure method of sending one character off on a quest to locate the Ice Crown, source of Doomdark's power. You can tackle each of these separately or together to form the complete 'Epic' game.

*The Lords of Midnight* is a very complex interactive game which requires far more space than is available here to fully explore all its features — besides we're looking forward to giving it a full review very soon. So, you might think, such a game must've been some time in the making. Not so.

According to Mike it all began to come together towards the end of last year. Perfecting the 'landscaping' routine was the cornerstone of the project. In September Mike brought the idea to Beyond's Terry Pratt.

The next major steps were the establishment of the map of the Land of Midnight and the story which forms a prelude to the game, both of which appear in the game's manual. "I tried not to be influenced by Tolkien," said Mike, "but some aspects of his work were bound to creep in, as in most other fantasy-based games."

Work proper on the programming started only in January of this year and was 99 per cent complete within three months — not bad going when you consider how much has been packed in the Spectrum's memory.

Comparisons with 'super adventures' *The Hobbit* and *Valhalla* are bound to be drawn so BIG K anticipated the debate by asking Mike his thoughts on adventure games in general.

"I'm not really an adventure games player," he openly admitted. "I came into computer gaming through wargames. I find most adventure games to be 'closed', allowing only one possible route to completion. *The Lords of Midnight* is an 'open' game using intelligent play by the computer. Routes aren't dictated by the programmer in advance nor is all the scenery preplanned and locked into the computer's memory. You are in control of the main characters and their ultimate destiny."





# A fine day for tennis on your Spectrum

This is Wimbledon  
The home of British tennis, enjoying Britain's fine weather

But this summer, things will be different. If rain stops play on court, you'll be able to carry on playing - with Sinclair's 'Match Point'! 'Match Point' is one of six new, all-action programs for your Spectrum. It lets you play tennis against the computer, a friend, or just sit back and watch an exhibition match.

Enjoy all the features of tennis - backhand and forehand shots, lobs, drop-shots, volleys, a scoreboard... even ball boys are on-call!

But good tennis strokes aren't everything. To win the Match Point Open Championships you'll need skill and tactics.

Luckily, though, you won't have to rely on the weather!



'Match Point' has been developed by Psion, one of the UK's top software houses.

You'll find it alongside Sinclair's other new titles - Stop the Express, Bubble Buster, Zipper Flipper, Eric and the Floater and Driller Tanks - in the shops, today.

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Selected Sinclair software lines are available from W.H. Smith computer stores, larger branches of Boots, John Menzies, Greens and most other software stockists nationwide.

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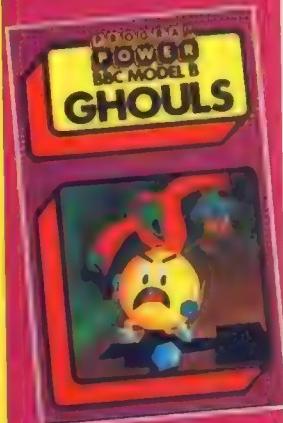
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**sinclair**



K = Could Be Better  
 KK = Could Be Worse  
 KKK = Unsurpassable

# RAVE from the GRAVE



## Reviewers

STEVE KEATON  
 NICKY XIKLUNA  
 TREVOR SPALL  
 KIM ALDIS  
 TONY TYLER  
 RICHARD BURTON  
 RICHARD COOK



Remember *Killer Gorilla*? Well, this is better in fact it's probably the best game ever made for the BBC. The graphics are superb, the sound is excellent and above all it makes me laugh. It's full of laughs, but that's not a real plus score, but you even have the option of using what the game sounds like and the second choice between levels has to be seen to be believed.

Ghoul is set in a haunted mansion and you have to find the right path through the rooms because avoid the various spaces. Avoid them by jumping over them or walking. All this is accompanied by spooky track and alarms and you have a choice of speed - slow or extremely fast. After levels from the first game, there are four new rooms and each one is packed with surprises. You can be shot, blown up, travel through mirrors, and other weird traps. It's a very tough game though. If you like you will lose interest fairly soon though.

An unique idea treated fully in presented and an absolute must for anyone who likes K.A. Game: GHOUls  
 Maker: MICRO POWER  
 Machine: BBC  
 Format: cassette  
 Price: £7.95  
 Rating: KKK



## This Jack's Alright



Nasty doesn't even begin to describe *Jet Power Jack*. Only an hour at the keys and I was reduced to a slobbering wreck who had to be physically restrained from putting a boot through the screen. It's one of those games where you control a little man with a jet pack. Poor old Jack has been caught by Nogrob the Terrible and unceremoniously dumped in a space garage.

You have controls for left, right and thrust to go up and you manoeuvre him around, avoiding the ever vigilant Space Googies, picking up fuel pods to take back to his spaceship. Sounds easy? Not a bit of it. The walls are all electrified and touching them means instant incineration. You also have very little room to move around in and this makes it an absolute nightmare. I spent hours smashing the unfortunate Jack into walls until I finally gave up.

Unless you're a hardened games freak, used to scores like telephone numbers then keep a strait-jacket handy — K.A. Game: JET POWER JACK  
 Maker: PROGRAM POWER  
 Machine: BBC  
 Format: cassette  
 Price: £7.95  
 Rating: KK

## TROOPA TRUCK

Whoever invented *Troopa Truck* should be put in a truck of his own design, taken out into the desert, and dumped. Never has a game infuriated so much by so few attempts to play it.

Let's start with the action. You are a truck. Like in the popular arcade games you have to move across the screen, blastin' boulders and jumpin' over any obstacles in your path. You are also plagued by airborne craft which must be eliminated before they blow holes in your way. It quickly became apparent to me that if I held down the fire button continuously, I could simultaneously eliminate the boulders and the flying craft. So there I lurked, never using any speed so that I could see what was coming. That's it. You carry on, sweaty mitt on button, until you get zapped, which you always do. For some obstacles are simply insurmountable. So you fall victim and the performance starts all over again.

**Good points:** When the truck is destroyed, the chassis collapses and sinks to the ground. The wheels fall off and scatter, making a rippling good 'churning-scrunch' sound. The truck noise itself is really great — sounds just like the brisk clip-clop of a horse. (Though Thrang knows why a truck wants to sound like a horse.)

All this joy crystallises against a background as eyecatching as a plate full of mud. Flat layers of colour form a landscape designed by a kindergarten impressionist. If I could spell what a raspberry sounds like, I'd blow one here. — N.X.

Game: TROOPA TRUCK  
 Maker: RABBIT  
 Machine: COMMODORE 64

Format: cassette  
 Price: £5.99  
 Rating: K

## ACORNSOFT GAMES

# Crazy Tracer

for the BBC Microcomputer Model B



DISC  
40 1 80  
DUAL FORMAT

Acorn can usually be relied on to produce good versions of classic games and this is no exception. *Crazy Tracer* is a copy of the excellent Painter.

You have to guide a paint roller around squares while avoiding monsters intent on flattening the roller. There are two different screens which alternate with each other. On the first you have to trace round rectangular lines which has in when completely surrounded. The second is more difficult. You can only fill squares adjacent to ones already filled if you change direction or move away from the square the roller runs out of paint and you have to go back to a completed square for a refill.

Extra lives are awarded for every 10,000 points scored and you can make the monsters jump if you get caught in a desperate situation. You also get bonus points for filling squares containing fruit.

*Crazy Tracer* has all the addictive qualities of games like *Pac-Man*. Basically simple and yet totally absorbing. — K.A.  
**Game:** Painter  
**Maker:** Acornsoft  
**Machine:** BBC Model B  
**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £19.99  
**Rating:** KK

## FLAP, FLAP, SPLAT!

*Flying Feathers* is an X-rated game for animal lovers. Imagine: it's a beautiful summer's day. You sit in a rustic rowing boat on a calm lake. Distant fields can be viewed, stretching out like Mother Goose's patchwork quilt over the horizon. Suddenly, the brilliant blue sky fills with birds. So you shoot them. Flap, flap, splat!

But you're only doing your job. You're a game warden with a shotgun, and you gotta git them critters afore they swoops durn an' gits yur fish.

A solidly-crafted, addictive game this. Very attractive hi-res graphics. A madly quacking duck bolts across the lake if you manage to acquire a bonus fish. There's even a theme tune that I actually hadn't heard before — not just another well worn music-hall favourite. Well worth a thrash — but strictly not for the birds. — N.X.

**Game:** FLYING FEATHERS  
**Maker:** BUBBLE BUS  
**Machine:** COMMODORE 64  
**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £8.99  
**Rating:** KK

## Down with the Peasants!

If you've ever wanted to become a landlord, then this is the game for you. You start off with a small amount of land and a few workers. You have to build houses and farms to increase your income. You can then hire more workers and buy more land. The game is set in a medieval style, with peasants working on the land and a king who wants to tax you. The game is quite challenging and requires careful planning to succeed and keep your workers happy.

The game is a bit of a mix between *Landlord* and *King of the Castle*, with a similar feel to the latter. It's a great game for anyone who enjoys strategy and management games.

## BARONY OF Martin

FOOD / MONEY  
LAND  
MERCENARIES  
ARMED WITH  
WORKERS

1605 DUBLOON / BUSH  
80 ACRES  
9 SPEARS  
81

DO YOU WISH TO BUY OR SELL LAND  
E-BUY E-SELL LAND  
EACH ACRE IS WORTH 12 DUBLOONS

**Game:** LAND  
**Maker:** PUBLICATION  
**Machine:** COMMODORE 64

**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £19.99  
**Rating:** KK

**Cuthbert in the Mines**

**MICRODEAL**

## MAKE MINE CUTHBERT

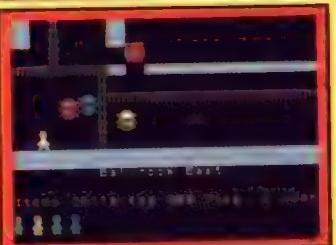
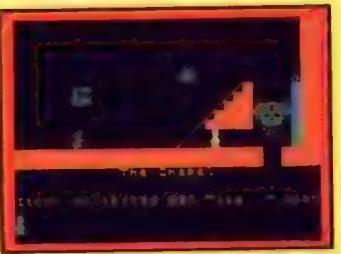
The continuing saga of *Cuthbert* reveals Microdeal's hero/victim to be trapped underground, his ambition (and, of course, yours) being to reach the surface. Cuthbert needs to jump up five levels along which trundle sets of trucks as obstacles to be avoided. Cuthbert must jump into the gaps if he is not to be knocked down to the level below. The bottom of the screen is a fiery pit which means the end of Cuthbert should he fall too far. To complicate matters a demon patrols a ladder spitting fiery death should he spot Cuthbert on a level.

Cuthbert has four 'lives' ("we can rebuild him, we have the technology") and you can use either the joystick or the arrow keys to guide to the single surface exit. Eight escapes means promotion to the next screen. There are five of these, ranging from 'easy' to 'impossible'. You can select which screen to start at, a feature which I feel should be the norm rather than the exception.

The graphics are good with Cuthbert response is quick and all the game sound have been well thought out an executed. Presentation includes a demonstration mode and a high score table is provided for those of you who are good enough to get on it. All in all, a thoroughly addictive fun game.

One minor (had to get it in) niggle why does the documentation entitle the program 'Cuthbert in the Mines' when the title page on-screen declares 'Cuthbert in the Mine'? Does Microdeal know something about BBC policy that we don't? — T.S.

**Game:** CUTHBERT IN THE MINES  
**Maker:** MICRODEAL  
**Machine:** DRAGON 32  
**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £8.99  
**Rating:** KK



**Game:** JET SET WILLY  
**Maker:** SOFTWARE PROJECTS  
**Machine:** SPECTRUM 48K  
**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £5.95  
**Rating:** KKK

## GREAT GAME, BUT...

*Jet Set Willy* arrived at the BIG K office late (thanks a bunch! SP!) the prorgame you might say of the micro scene's cosmic megastar. However it's put me in the unenviable task of trying to review a game that, as I write, is already Number One with a bullet in most of the game charts. I guess that heathy dispenses of the questions, will you like it and will it be a success?

So, for the few who've recently returned from swan-upping in darkest Belgium, here we have the second appearance of Miner Willy, fresh from his starring role in the Bug-Byte Software Projects mega hit *Manic Miner*.

Willy makes his elegant reappearance on the cover of *Jet Set Willy*, head down the lav in a graffiti-covered bathroom 'tasteful'. SP has non NCB approved wellies at the bottom. The premise, it seems, is that Willy has become so stinkingly rich from the fortune he discovered in *Manic Miner* that he has bought himself a huge mansion and thrown the mother of all parties.

The party's over and Willy wants to crawl into bed (and die?) but his housekeeper insists he collects

every glass and bottle left in the mansion before he can do so.

The stage is set for Willy to take off on another sojourn through the strange mind of Matthew Smith as each room he enters (and there are around 60) is some incredible carnival of moving things, hazards and rewards. In this respect it's identical to *Manic Miner*. All you have to do is keep Willy moving and try to jump over any traps or dangers. Use up all his lives and it's The Foot (unclad this time!) for you my lad.

The major disappointment for me was the lack of demo mode. SP claim *Jet Set Willy* is "Total Graphics Adventure" (say what?) and are offering a Big Prize to the first person who cracks it. All well and good, but at least no-hoppers like myself who can only manage about half a dozen screens had the chance of seeing the full range of Matthew Smith's lunacy on MM. Any kind soul out there want to tell me what I'm missing?

That said, *Jet Set Willy* is a worthy successor to *Manic Miner*. The graphics, animation and sound are as good as, if not better than the original. Mana,

the housekeeper, in particular, is superbly characterised. The way she taps her foot as Willy approaches his bed and then points an accusing finger towards the mess he has to clean up is brilliant.

Okay, come on out of the way — let's talk about the security system on *Jet Set Willy*.

Software companies are of course going to fight the serious piracy problem in any way they can and I support them in the fight, but the bare-brained system in use on *JSW* isn't going to help anyone!

A small, inlay-sized card containing 180 different 4-colour combinations comes with each copy of *JSW*. Once loaded the program asks for the particular combination at column x, row y on the card. The user then has to search out that combination

and key it in. You only get two attempts before the program wipes itself! There's no way you can erase a mistake.

The system fails on two levels. First, the card is too small and the print quality so bad that it's difficult to distinguish between a red and a magenta even if you have good eyesight. Secondly, the system takes no account of people who are colour blind or who may be playing on black and white sets.

The system is a hindrance and, I'm sure will discourage people playing *JSW* when they finally like. A shame that a program of this quality and popularity should inhibit the majority of customers, fun-loving hackers on account of the actions of the minority of soft merchants.

Think again SP... RB

## Pitching and Punching



## Too Late... Too Pricey!

LIKE A GUEST late for his own party *Pac-Man* finally arrives on the Spectrum scene.

Yes, folks, the genuine, fully authorised, accept-no-fakes, original Ghost Gobbler is here. Purists who have been holding out against the hordes of Pac-Clones, this is it!

The best compliment that can be paid to AtariSoft's Spectrum edition of *Pac-Man* is that it is an extremely faithful reproduction of the original arcade barnstormer. All the ingredients that made the game a classic (ghosts, power pills, fruit, etc.) are rendered in easily recognisable graphics form.

In fact about the only thing that shows up the Spectrum's limitations is some rough animation. Sound, however, is very good and manages to retain the characteristic 'wacka wacka' sound of the game.

A high score table, attract mode, keyboard/joystick options and a cute 'interlude' after each two screens round off a generally high quality presentation — which is to be expected of an Atari product.

The big problem of course is



that *Pac-Man* has already been done to death. Atari have attempted to close the proverbial stable door with the horse cold in its grave.

Even those who haven't already got some form of the ghost chomping game in their collections will be hard put to cough up nearly £15 for this cassette-based edition. Atari seem to be blind to the realities of the software marketplace in this country. Someone had better perform some laser surgery on their corporate optic nerve before lack of foresight condemns this particular game to some dusty shelf in a Hall of Fame somewhere. — R.B.

**Game:** PAC-MAN  
**Maker:** ATARISOFT  
**Machine:** SPECTRUM  
**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £14.99  
**Rating:** KK

K = Could Be Better  
 KK = Could Be Worse  
 KKK = Unsurpassable

# COMPUTER GAMES • VIDEO GAMES

## VLAADS AND VLASSIES

**THERE ARE FATES WORSE than DEATH!!!** yells the cassette insert. **WARNING** We strongly recommend this game be played with the lights on, "admonish the instructions sternly. This allegedly 'Spine chilling Adventure game for the BBC micro,' is in fact a bit of a mess. It starts off okay with a 'music while you wait' interrupt loader, playing organ tunes as the bulk of the program loads, and even the odd bouncing skull, but once you hit the adventure the program's true nature is — gasp — at last revealed. The language parser is awful, accepting extremely limited two-word commands. Ygor also puts in an appearance (a "mythsstate"?!) I couldn't find any graphics worth mentioning, although some sound effects were pretty neat. I should add.

Worst of all was the 'smart' responses to unparsed or mis-spelt input. After the twentieth time, these become a little... how shall I put it... worn? The program is very long, but I can't help feeling had it contained less rooms and more graphics/sound, it would have been tons better. Perhaps next time. Micrograf -- A.G.

**Game:** VAMPIRE CASTLE.  
**Maker:** MICROGRAF  
**Machine:** BBC B

**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £7.95  
**Rating:** K

## Woodman! Save that Tree!

Woodland Terror is a text-only adventure for the Beeb. The action takes place in Mode 7, and heavy use is made of the teletext features: colour, flashing and double height text.

As it's written in machine code, the delay between commands and action isn't noticeable. The lexical analyser (word processing routine) is an adequate verb-noun job, like GO WEST... GET BRICK, but nonetheless the texture descriptions give the game some charm and charisma. The text is compressed, allowing a

much larger and complex game than with usual methods (Acornsoft's adventure series, for example). The instructions are adequate, and my only real beef is that the scenario is a little — uh — traditional. Genie enslaves local inhabitants... hero called upon to release "the unhappy land" from tyranny!!!

However, it's a tight and neat adventure... well worth checking out. — A.G.

**Game:** WOODLAND TERROR  
**Maker:** MP SOFTWARE  
**Machine:** BBC B  
**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £7.48  
**Rating:** KK



## BEEF

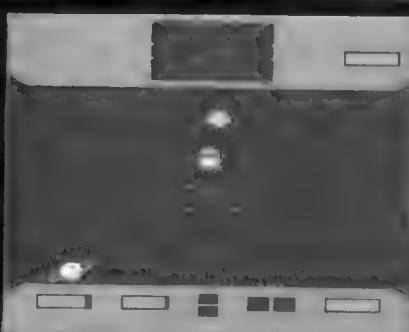
I have a beef with Cybotron. I may not always smile my sprites like a sprout of Bell, but this time I'm holding the blame solidly on the game. Allow me to explain. The world has been taken over by robots and are intent on eliminating all mankind. It is your task to kill the robots before they kill you. But here lies a problem, for as soon as you make our screen debut you are surrounded by robots. As you can only fire in the direction of travel, it is impossible to survive for very long.

It took what seemed like an eternity to begin the game. Then to cap it all, I had to deal with "Fred the rules" written at the top of the starting screen

and the graphics were fairly handsome, but the soundage was as sweet as the sound of a can being opened by human teeth. — N.X.

**Game:** CYBOTRON  
**Maker:** ANTRON  
**Machine:** COMMODORE 64  
**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £7.95  
**Rating:** K

## Raiders of the Lost Cylon



A 3D space battle. A 'n' fair pushing definitions a bit to call this game "3D", but they've got the space battles off to a T. Done in mode 5, the game's fairly colourful and very fast.

From a Star Trek-like main display that scrolls in two dimensions you've got to zonk the nasties by aligning them against stationary cross-hairs. This process is slightly confounded by the fact that the nasties are hurtling towards you! They appear to be suicidal (perhaps on account of so many lost relatives in Space Invaders) and unless you hit them first, they'll plough right into you. If you get too damaged, you can dock with your yellow mother-ship.

You're only limited shield energy and fuel, and the lasers have to have time to recuperate after fire shots. The animation is pretty good, except on the title sequence.

As you turn and accelerate, stars and other stellar debris (you know, an occasional Tardis, the odd binary star) fly past the main viewport, giving the game a good feel. Level one is manageable, but level two is impossible. — A.G.

**Game:** CYDON ATTACK  
**Maker:** A&F  
**Machine:** BBC B

**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £7.90  
**Rating:** KK

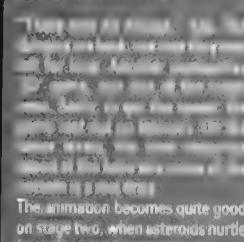
## KISS ME, HARDY

**TRAFAVGAR** — a simulation of the great naval battle. Cannon-balls smash into hulls and tear holes in sails. Magazines explode. (Others just lose circulation.) Ships sink. Flags are struck and prizes taken Ah-ha. Two opposing lines of ships face up to each other. You select which ship to do battle from, and a "close up" is displayed, side on, of your and the enemy's ship. You then proceed to try and paste the other guy by firing cannonballs at him. Queensbury Rules apparently apply, however, as you have to take turns to zonk each other. "The other guy" can either be the computer or another human. You give the elevation of the cannons, after taking the windage into account, and let fly. If you hit, pixels fry. This is fun for the first twenty shots, but then terminal monotony sets in. It's written in Basic, and I'm afraid I detected an unacceptable amount of windage coming from this program. — A.G.

**Game:** TRAFALGAR  
**Maker:** SQUIRREL  
**Software:**  
**Machine:** BBC B

**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £8.00  
**Rating:** K

## HOMWORK



The animation becomes quite good on stage two, when asteroids hurtle

control. So graphically stunning and fast, but not enough work on the game-plan. — A.G.



## The Orbiter Arbitrator

A flight simulator on the Atari VCS? C'mon, you've got to be kidding! Nope, no joke this. Not only a flight simulator but the ultimate simulator — the Space Shuttle.

Incredibly Activision in general and Steve Kitchen in particular have managed to squeeze a full Space Shuttle mission into a video game system with less memory than your average brick. A magnificient effort that has worked.

You are in control of the 101st Shuttle mission (suitably far enough in the future to add a suspension of disbelief). Your brief is to blast off from Cape Canaveral, go into orbit and rendezvous with a satellite as many times as possible on the fuel you have, then go through re-entry and land your craft at Edwards Air Force Base in California. Simple, huh? Hah!

There's the small matter of digesting a superbly technical 32-page flight manual; familiarising yourself with about a dozen different on-screen displays and around 25 'Stat' message codes.

Then there are the controls. Every switch on the VCS console has a function (often two) from starting the countdown to opening and closing the cargo bay doors. An extremely useful overlay and 'crib sheet' is supplied which are tailored to fit the Atari console. Even the joystick has to cope with keeping the Shuttle on course in three axes as well as handling thrust and direction.

The screen displays a forward view through two of the Shuttle's windows. The limited graphics of the VCS are put to good use with convincing shots of space and the blue-green curvature of Earth rotating below. You really have to search for the satellite you are to rendezvous with but are rewarded with a realistic rendering of it when eventually located.

Below the 'windows' are two horizontal thrust indicators and below those is the main display screen on which all flight conditions are monitored. The amount of information displayed in this small area is truly staggering and requires your full concentration.

So, once you have mastered all the above you can take on a mission or two. A safe return to base will earn you a ranking dependent on the number of dockings you've achieved and minimum fuel units used.

Now I'd be the first to admit that I've never actually flown in a Shuttle (I have this allergy to excessive vacuum and absolute zero) but I imagine that this game comes pretty close to the real McCoy. As a computer f.sim Space Shuttle is excellent; as a VCS f.sim it is truly outstanding. I'm looking forward to discovering a lot more about it on future missions. —B.B.

**Game:** SPACE SHUTTLE  
**Maker:** ACTIVISION  
**Machine:** Atari 2600 VCS.

**Format:** ROM  
**Price:** £29.95  
**Rating:** KKK

## SENTENCED TO HARD LABOUR

Eureka! I know just what *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* felt like after all that wadding! He had a piteously sore wrist just like mine own after performing through this merciless game. I carried on in a vain search for the clues needed to take on the adventure game that is a sibling cassette in this duo pack.

For those that knoweth not the old tale, it goeth thusly: Whilst Merlin is out, his lazy apprentice uses magic to cheat on his cleaning chores. Merlin's spells go ape in the hands of the lad, and an uncontrollable army of living brooms drown Merlin's tasty gaff with dishwater.

Let me describe the "action". On yer left, brooms approach carrying pails of water towards screen right; a crudely-drawn vertical wall which is your dam. To win: protect your dam. The brooms will fill it with water and drown you, the brooms kick your bricks. To stop them, you simply stand in their way.

Nowhere near magical, alas — and outstanding only in that it's the nearest game-play gets to hard manual labour. The design is drab, the graphics are dull and indistinct, sound is partly naff — the same few notes from the film-music repeated ad wotsit. Its incentive rating is zilch. —N.X.

**Game:** THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE  
**Maker:** PHOENIX  
**Machine:** COMMODORE 64

**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £6.99  
**Rating:** none



## SALTY SEADOG

Those despairing over the dearth of decent software for the unexpanded, underpowered VIC would do well to check out this salty seadog from Cap'n Micro. In it you must sail a beleaguered battleship through a positive storm of oceanic hostility. Shoals of missile-bearing subs and low flying bombers do their best to scupper your tub and only some spirited manoeuvring will keep you afloat. It's no good relying on the ship's depth charges as you've only a score to drop.

**Game:** INVINCIBLE  
**Maker:** MR MICRO  
**Machine:** VIC 20

Three speed levels add a bit of variety and the graphics are neat 'n' tidy. I quickly gravitated towards the fastest level — not, I hasten to add, because I was much cop, but because I found the wildly whizzing boat to be exceptionally cumsical. The thing would hurtle back and forth, totally out of control, spewing tiny black depth charges and promptly exploding at the first enemy salvo.

The scores were as low as my grin was toothy. —S.K.

**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £4.99  
**Rating:** KK

## BUCK ROGERS and the PLANET OF BLAH



### YOU SAY TOMAYTO

I haven't seen a short young dude in weeks. But I keep right on looking. There's nothing else to do. Then suddenly I spot one! The little critter starts at the sound of my armoured Vecktrakk and legs it into the maze. I ram on the gas. The mug scuttles away — only to find itself cornered in a dead end. It's bulbous eyes spin-like hubcaps and it rasps in defiance. With a grin I punch the Electron Interrogator ...

Visually at least this SF maze chase is pretty impressive. Each maze, or sector, to use the vernacular, contains a family of Scarabs which, when confronted, are revealed to be nothing more than tiny, bug-eyed imbeciles. Your tasks is to fry these fruits and the ... on to a new sector.

Unfortunately, despite the sharp visuals the gameplay is a trifle monotonous. Still, those fancying a short bout of tomato trashing will not be disappointed. —S.K.

**Game:** ZIGZAG  
**Maker:** DK THOMAS  
**Machine:** SPECTRUM 48K  
**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £6.95  
**Rating:** KK



Disappointing translation of an old game for the Commodore Adam, it comes in the form of Coseney's high-speed battleship. Basically, if you're actual to sit over again, along which Buck will, he doesn't actually fly, more or less stagger — while the usual crew of bad monsters bob around in front of him. Flying this way through this maze and a deadly uninteresting crew of interstellar ogres, Buck then finds himself in a Now strange Saturakid planet. Still we've had turtle boy in strings. And then with the usual humdrum blasting, it moves into screen three, the final planet doused with strange display towers. I mean, like, this is boring, you know it this way. For a debut game on an Entertainer System On Wheel Unseen is ... it's a turkey and then so although the actual buckship is smoothly enough, the trench itself like the one of those orbital devices used to make you travel back, while objects, planes, towers and so on (there's the world) through the and written in BASIC. Put in another way, they stupid Planet Of Doom together, guy who wrote Zaxxon was out to be literally. —T.T.

**Game:** BUCK ROGERS & THE PLANET OF DOOM  
**Maker:** CBS-DOLCO  
**Machine:** COMMODORE ADAM  
**Format:** Coleco cassette  
**Price:** £14.99 (supplied with Adam computer)  
**Rating:** none

K  
KK  
KKK

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Could Be Worse  
Unsurpassable

## S-COMPUTER GAMES

### TAO GOES HIGH-TECH

*THE I-CHING* is an ancient method of divination formulated by the sages. Choose more than four thousand years ago. Puzzled orientals would consult the oracle seeking guidance or reassurance throughout their immortal lives. It was a source of great revelation. And now Tao has gone hi-tech with the release of this novel program from Virgin. You too will be able to delve into the mysterious world of oriental philosophy!

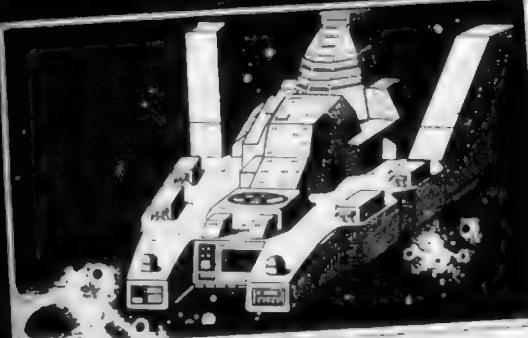
The I-Ching itself is composed of sixty-four individual hexagrams, each one represented by an appropriate text. Upon loading you'll be able to construct this hexagram using the space bar. It's important that you bear in mind your question to the oracle as you do this, as no answers given will raise a sword on the brows of the High Ching.

Once completed the hexagram is entered into the system and a message appears. Enlightenment is yours! Apparently based on the aged words of the King Wang, the text is couched in a wonderful pseudo-mystical rhetoric that's guaranteed to rouse a smile. The aspirant man gives careful thought to criminal cases and hesitates before invoking the death penalty. "You'd better before adding — rather ominously — 'In the eighth month there will be evil'."

It's hard to believe that anyone might take this all seriously, but for something oddness it's hard to beat. To be loaded with tongue firmly in cheek, grasshopper! — S.K.

Game: I-CHING  
Maker: VIRGIN GAMES  
Machine: DRAGON 32

Format: cassette  
Price: £10.95  
Rating: KK

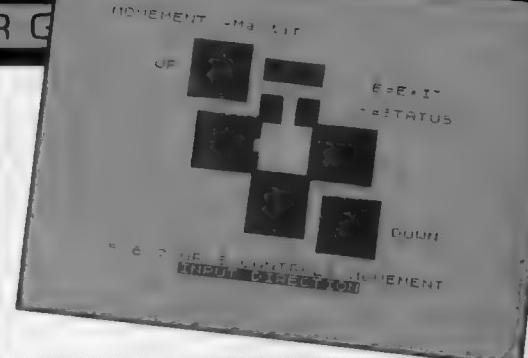


Adequate implementation of the standard Star Trek game. As commander of the USS *Endeavor* it's your mission to go boldly where absolutely loads of people have gone before and eradicated the dreaded Krugons from the galaxy. Krugons are, of course, a filthy alien type not entirely dissimilar to Klingons. You begin each mission with a rather meagre complement of twenty photon torpedoes, limited phasers and a full tank of gas (gas?). These can all be replenished by docking with one of numerous Starbases throughout the game. All the complexities required of a Star Trek program have been included. There are energy levels to juggle with, shields to wield, warp speeds to watch and scanners to scan with. Thankfully the screen display is both clear and comprehensive. Along with all the various status

reports you get a space chart which shows your position in regards to other quadrants and a local scanner which monitors the current areas of play. Animation on this is rather jerky and unimpressive.

Needless to say there's a lot to consider and much patience is required. I just couldn't cope at all. Docking the damn thing was next to impossible. Inevitably I would guide the gleaming Starship thoughtfully into the side of an unsuspecting Starbase. It's a pity that I wasn't meant to be totalling them instead of Krugons. My ratings might have been more impressive. — S.K.

Game: SPACE FIGHTER  
Maker: MICRODEAL  
Machine: DRAGON 32  
Format: cassette  
Price: £8.00  
Rating: KK



### DUNGEON EXPUNGIN'

Labyrinths full of beasts are all too familiar fare in adventure games, and Temptation's shot at this D&D development offers no fresh view on a rapidly tiring format.

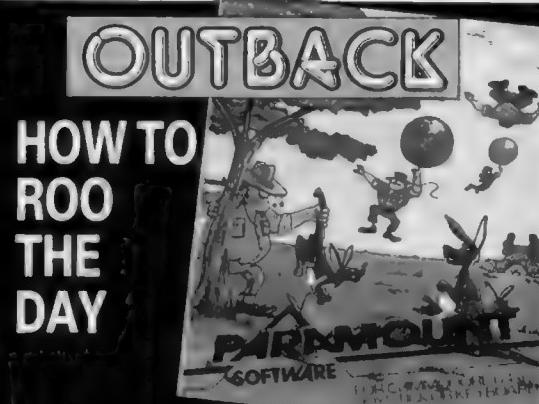
The most basic of graphics plot a colourless course through two choices of maze, both the usual quota of basilisks, hobgoblins, etc. Nothing so exciting as seeing these creatures onscreen, of course — a presence in words only, with a choice of attacking (and you nearly always win) or retreating.

All you have to do is find a way out and collect treasure en route. Small sections of the floorplan are revealed to you as you go

Not especially simple, I guess, but there's no thrill of escape, no tease in tracking out the solution. Sound is at a premium with the cursor keys offering a bare beep for movement.

When there's a games like *Dragonslayer* or *Atla Atla* around, nobody's going to be much bothered with such a bloodless quest — R.C.

Game: DUNGEONS OF DOOM  
Maker: TEMPTATION  
Machine: SPECTRUM 128  
Format: cassette  
Price: £5.95  
Rating: K



In *OUTBACK* I was Big Roo, a mega kangaroo who had to protect a nest of bijou kanga from being bashed by swat men. In the first stages of the game the swatters drop from balloons. The next swat are dropped from parachutes, and the final wave pop out of the hillsides.

I valiantly defended my young 'uns, but found my movements interestingly limited. I was confined to bashing up and down at one side of the screen, taking pot shots. Also there was a crucial spot just before the blatters landed where my shots had no effect for no apparent reason.

The graphics were very cutesy, and the squeaks uttered by the young kangaroos when bagged were almost heart-rending. However, this game did not turn my crank. It did not catch me in that fatal combination of challenge and frustration that prevents you from putting a game down. This kangaroo didn't tie me down, sport — N.X.

Game: OUTBACK  
Maker: PARAMOUNT SOFTWARE  
Machine: COMMODORE 64

Format: cassette  
Price: £7.50  
Rating: K

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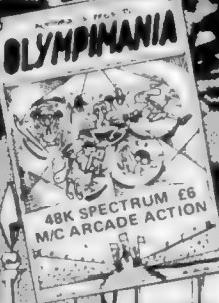
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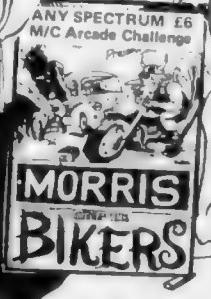
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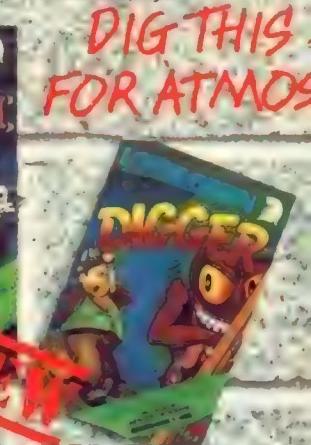
You are commanding a prototype spacecraft on a test flight when you are attacked by an Alien force. Dare you test your Hyperblast and plunge into Hyperspace? Fast action, 100% machine-code, 15 screens, keyboard manoeuvrability.



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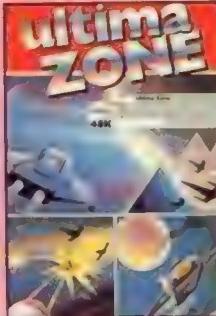
## MEGAWARZ

**Game:** MEGAWARZ  
**Maker:** PARAMOUNT SOFTWARE  
**Machine:** COMMODORE 64  
**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £7.50  
**Rating:** KK

*Mega Warz* is a cracking game derived from Asteroids. To return to Earth you have to visit seven planets. Each has its own, increasingly determined nasty alien hordes to contend with. I hate to admit it, but I only got as far as Neptune. And it wasn't for lack of trying. It takes a lot of skill to manoeuvre the sensitive spacecraft, without sending it flying into collision with a Baddie. That's my excuse and I'm sticking to it. Pure addiction — I loved it! — N.X.

## Tri-Zapper

An attractive, smooth-running arcade three-parter that's simple enough to lure you inwards yet complex enough to give you a run for your money after a level or six (which frankly is all I've ever managed). You grapple first with what appear to be a mutant bunch of those tried and true *Invaders*, the spear-carriers of the video game and here, appropriately enough, dubbed "Walkons". This task is complicated by the gradual release of hazardous and disconcerting bouncing bombs. Proceed to the cunning bonus stage which entails some tricky manoeuvr-



ing of a "Henk Class Cruiser" before destroying some small and perfectly defenceless white dots. Finally you must pilot another ship through rows of enemy craft and past lethal comets in order to dispose of a hostile spy satellite.

Thereafter it all repeats, but with more Walkons, bouncing bombs, enemy craft, comets, spy satellites and of course small, defenceless white dots.

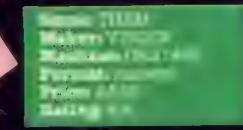
Controls are pleasingly simple, graphics neat if a trifle flat and unimaginative. A game where calm and method count for more than flash and bravado which at first made me think its pleasures were subtle, but left me wondering whether they were merely shallow. — P.R.

**Game:** ULTIMAZONE  
**Maker:** TANSOFT  
**Machine:** ORIC 48K  
**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £8.50  
**Rating:** KK

## THOSE...

A witty and inventive "Paranoid Fantasy" — so sub-titled, it seems, because "THEY" are out to get you. Sure, that just gives it something in common with about 95% of all other arcade games, but in this one "THEY" are fiendish indeed: taunting demons, homing bombs and — worst of all — question marks that follow you around. Add to this some devilishly awkward controls — LJKM for up-down, left-right movement and firing direction plus further keys for shields and bullets — and it all adds up to the kind of game that can send you scuttling off to your first nervous breakdown. In short, it's horribly difficult.

Good job, then, that it's got a sense of humour. You, for example, are a dippy-looking smiley face. The question mark's a laugh too. So is the rather melodramatic fourth stage (actually, like the second, a bit of a doddle) in which you're trapped on a "Conveyorbelt To Doom", like a scene from an old Vincent Price movie, until you blast the "nightmares" in the time-honoured fashion. Even the fifth level, where you must match up pairs of funny bones with yet more smiley faces, looks like it might be a giggle but I've only got there a few times and am thus still thrust into a state of panic and confusion whenever I do. — D.R.



## WHO DUG THIS UP?



What's this? *Digger?* Sounds like an Australian down a coal mine. Let's load it and see what happens (Loads program and reads title page). 'By the Keyboard Kid' says the screen. Yawn. The title page shows the controls so I know what to do. Up, down, left, right and pump. Pump? Nothing here about mending punctures (re-reads minimal instructions on package). Ah. It seems there's this garden plagued by things called Footas and Pubas which are highly averse to being pumped up with said pump. They have a tendency to explode. I'm sure I would too. Footars can breathe fire and gamma rays which is no good for the tomatoes so it's up to you to do something about it.

It only took a couple of goes to form an opinion about *Digger*. The sound was like the wind going out of a rubber duck. The graphics were slow and jerky with nasty glitches left on the screen when the beasts explode and the program crashed twice for no reason and had to be reloaded.

In a word forgot it. I have. — K.A.

**Game:** DIGGER  
**Maker:** VISION  
**Machine:** BBC

**Format:** cassette  
**Price:** £1.50  
**Rating:** KK

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HAVE YOU EVER come home after a hard day's graft and a less than invigorating bus journey and found everyone bar the cat crammed around your BBC, oblivious of everything except the annihilation of any alien daft enough to stick his head round the screen? If you had the foresight to build the BIG K EPROM Programmer then this could all change because now you can hardware lock your computer with *Padlock*.

*Padlock* is a short machine code routine which you can blow into an EPROM and place in one of the sideways ROM sockets of your computer. When inserted it stops anyone using the computer without a password.

The accompanying listing contains the *Padlock* routine along with a BASIC utility so that you can easily set up the sort of display you want and your own personal entry code.

First of all type in the listing. Before you do anything else save it to tape. If you don't and you've made a mistake you may find the system will crash and you'll have to start all over again. It wouldn't hurt to have a friend to check through it with you as well. Remember that the only real test for bugs in the assembler section is when the code is blown into the EPROM.

When run the program will present a prompt asking you to input the display message which

will confront you when you switch on (you might wish to display your name and address in case the machine is stolen). The program allows you to include carriage returns so you can format the display in any way you wish but you can only have 250 characters. There is a small display in the top right corner indicating how many characters you have left. It's useful to remember that the SHIFT function keys will insert control characters so that you can have colours in the display.

When satisfied press the <TAB> key and you will be asked to input the entry code. The same rules apply as before but don't make the code too complicated. If you forget it you won't be able to use your own machine! Remember that *Padlock* will also expect any spaces or control characters that you enter here.

You will now be asked whether you want the routine assembled with the test addresses or EPROM addresses. You would be well advised to test the routine first so press T. The program will call *Padlock* three times. Firstly as though it were a cold start and finally as from BASIC, you will have to type "OLD" to get your program back (this routine is not really to test your display but more as a means of checking for bugs in the machine code).

Now you know that the program works you can run it again

and assemble it with the EPROM addresses. The program will now save the buffer for you ready to load into the buffer area of the EPROM programmer.

After the EPROM is blown it can be placed in any of the sideways ROM sockets but it must have a lower priority than BASIC (i.e. in any socket left of BASIC). A word of warning about this one. If you don't feel confident about playing around inside the computer then get someone who knows to do it for you. Cracked boards and bent pins on chips can be expensive!

You can also call *Padlock* with \*LOCK at any point in a BASIC program, useful if you want to keep that blockbusting game



you've been working on away from pirates!

There are several ways of entering paged ROMs on the BBC Micro, but the method we are interested in is known as 'Service Call Entry'. Under certain conditions the ROMs are scanned with a number in the accumulator according to the type of service requested. The ROM can inspect this number and decide whether to take action or not.

When paged ROMs are entered an information block is expected by the operating system.

This is set up by PROheader and contains information like jump instructions for the service and language entry points and the title and copyright strings of the EPROM.

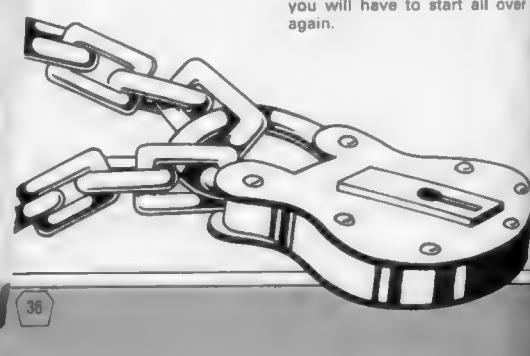
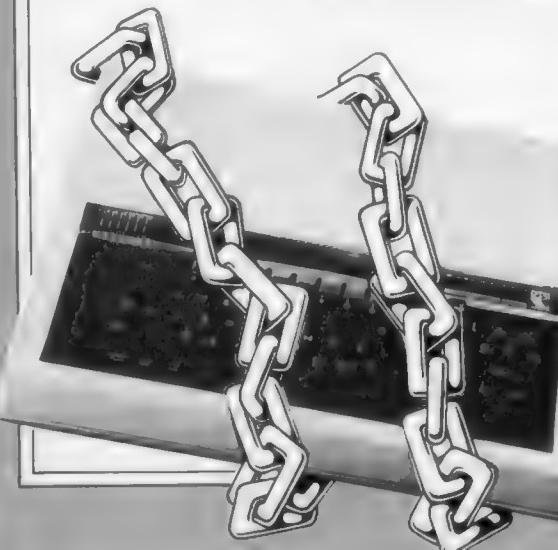
The three service calls that we need to intercept are Break, \*HELP and unrecognised operating system command (a '\*' command). These will enter into the ROMs at the service entry point ('service') with the numbers 3, 9 and 4 respectively in the accumulator and if you look at lines 210 to 280 you can see that the first thing we do is to check for these numbers and branch to the appropriate subroutines if they are detected. If not the ROM is excited.

If a Break is detected control is passed to the subroutine 'break'. This saves the registers and then calls two further subroutines, 'padlock' and 'basic'. The 'padlock' routine prints the display message to the screen and waits for the correct entry code after which 'basic' enters BASIC after finding out which socket it is in.

If the user (this is you, by the way) has issued an unrecognised command, control goes to 'command' which checks if the command was \*LOCK. If it was we don't need to call BASIC after the entry code has been input since we want to return control to the users program, so only subroutine 'padlock' is called after which the ROM is exited.

Finally, if \*HELP is issued then 'help' prints out the title of the EPROM as held in the information block at the beginning of the chip and then leaves the chip.

Now all you have to do is start key-tapping. Remember, though, you must make sure that the program is fully debugged. If there is any problem with the EPROM software then chances are the machine will crash and you will have to start all over again.





Careful typing — the BIG K key to success with listings

# 68000 ASSEMBLER

THIS IS the second in a series of articles on the Motorola 68000 Microprocessor Unit, a silicon chip that has gained star status by virtue of being selected (in its 8-bit guise) by Sir Clive's Merry Men to grace the Sinclair QL.

It should not be overlooked that this very useful chip has been around for quite some time and is now appearing in computers such as Apple's Lisa, Macintosh and Fortune 16/32.

The 68000 has evolved from the Motorola stable from the 6800 through the 6809, finally to its present day implementation which has 10 times the relative processing performance of its original ancestor.

## HIGH-LEVEL

As in life, there are pros and cons of doing anything in a particular manner. In the case of 68000 language processing one might argue that high-level languages would be naturally faster than its 8-bit cousins, by way of benefitting from the chip's high-level language support philosophy. You could also put forward the view that, generally, high level languages are more productive from a time-taking point of view. Again I would agree with you — but point out that an assembly language program would be faster and more efficient during processing. I would also point out that if you write untidily and without thought for structure in a high-level language then it, too, can be difficult to debug. One place a high-level language can score is in its portability, should it in theory run on another machine using the same high-level language — but we all know what happens in practice! This is where assembly language very often fails. Due to its nature, it is often dependant on the hardware for which it has been written. Often it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the hardware to make the best use of the machine; this may entail obtaining, reading and using knowledge from chip manufacturers' Data Sheets (information on a particular chip and its functions). Hopefully you can see from this that the language you choose to use is a matter of 'horses for courses'. I wouldn't (couldn't) program a real time interactive arcade style game in R.P.G. M, but I would use it to program a report on insurance

premiums with sub-totals. But then, I'm naturally boring.

If you have programmed in a high-level language (presumably BASIC) you may not have known what is actually happening. Generally in interpreted BASIC, you have typed in a program and given the computer the command 'RUN', oblivious of the fact that simply to print the letter 'a' the processor has had to read what keys you have pressed, convert them to ASCII, store them in memory, validate your command, then decide where on the screen to print — and, if applicable, what bytes make up the image of an 'a' character when printed — finally returning to a routine that waits for your next key press.

The above may sound like a lot of work — and it is. But that is only an overview of what machine code does. Take the part above about 'validate your command'. What this entails is analysing your instruction, determining what is required to be done and doing routines at the 'machine level' to achieve that. By 'machine level' I mean the point where the software has finally, really, reached the hardware.

## READ AND WRITE

BASIC and other languages reside in memory (generally RAM so that they can be changed as required). When you run a program you do not think too much about where it is placed (location) in memory; similarly you never think twice where, and in what form, variables are located. When programming in assembly language that now becomes your decision. To help you manufacturers usually provide a 'memory map' of the machine. This normally gives you information such as at what address the screen starts and what address it ends at ('Address', by the way, is only another word for 'location'). Other useful addresses generally given are operating system areas used, ROM locations, and, if the company is feeling benevolent, starting points (entry points) to useful machine code routines such as reading the keyboard and writing to the screen. A part of the machine you cannot usually access from a high-level language is the microprocessor itself. It is not part of the mem-

ory (see Fig 1) and thus you cannot read from it or write to it (from a high-level language) it normally contains its own memory called registers which can be manipulated by machine code instructions (generated by using an assembler).

## REGISTERED BITS

The 68000 contains two main types of registers — Data Registers and Address Registers. There are at any one time 8 of each available. They have names rather boringly called D0 to D7 for the Data Registers and — surprise, surprise — A0 to A7 for the Address Registers. They are all 32 bits wide (i.e. can hold a four byte value). There are three more registers in the 68000 and they are called the Program Counter, the Stack Pointer and the Status Register. The Program Counter and the Stack Pointer are both 32 bits wide whereas the Status Register is only 16 bits. The Program Counter holds the address of the next instruction to be processed from memory. The Status Register serves as an indicator to what has occurred in the machine. The Stack Pointer is used to contain the next free address in memory to the 'stack'. The stack can be likened to a very temporary note pad where information can be placed and retrieved. The Stack is not a Register itself and is not contained in the MPU but is assigned (allocted) an area of memory in which it can expand and contract. (Much more about the stack later).

Finally there is a register that is sometimes available and sometimes not. We have already mentioned it under stack pointer AND A7! The truth of the matter is that A7 and the Stack Pointer Register are the one and same thing. But just to complicate everything it has an auto-ego! There are in fact two Stack Pointers of which one only is accessible at a time. These two A7's both have names: the 'User Stack Pointer' and 'The Supervisor Stack Pointer'. What determines which one is accessed is the state of a bit in the Status Register. A bit, as you know, can be either set to a logical '1' or a '0'. It cannot be both, therefore it is either one Register (e.g. User Stack Pointer) or the other (in this example the

Supervisor Stack Pointer). (See Fig 2).

What has just been discussed is often termed 'the internal architecture' of a chip (it in fact encompasses the instructions as well). The external architecture is the memory and support chips and how these are arranged. In the 68000 MPU series the program counter and addressing of memory must occur on an even boundary (see Fig 3). If it doesn't then an exception occurs (a condition that the processor must attend to as quickly as possible).

The Motorola 68000 Microprocessor Unit (MPU) is the basis of a series of chips based on the same architecture. Its design philosophy is based on providing a simple, yet powerful, compact, yet useful instruction set and facilities both in hardware and software to enable it to be productive. In the next instalment we'll make a start on some machine code.

Figure 1



Figure 2

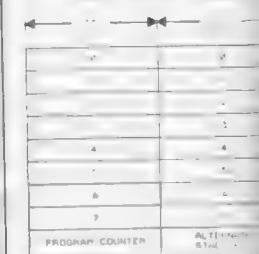


Figure 3

BYTES	BYTES
D	-
-	-
A	-
-	-
U	-
S	-

NOTE: FFFFFE THE ADDRESS OF THE STACK POINTERS ARE ALLOCATED IN THE LOWER 16 BYTES OF THE 68000

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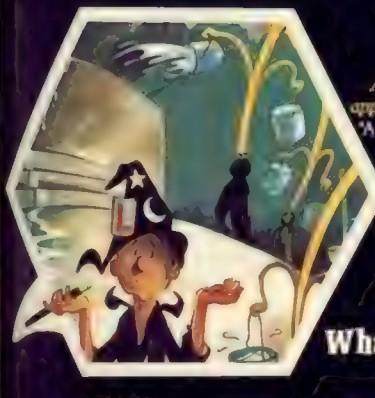
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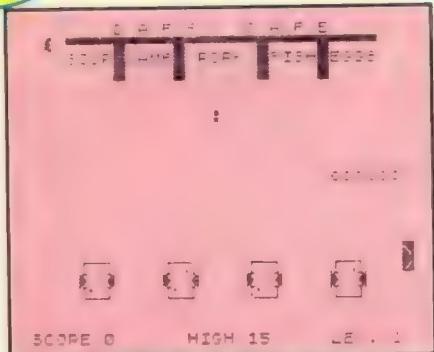
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Welcome

by Adam Bull  
for SPECTRUM

"Ees no good, Mr Fawltly.  
Ees too much! The trolleys,  
they chase me. The  
customers, they get angry  
and change the order. The  
feet they throb from  
running. An' you say the  
game she has 13 levels?  
Aargh! I go crazy!"  
You'll have to excuse him,  
he's from Barcelona.



## SET MENU

## Program notes

5—left 8—right  
6—down 7—up  
(If you don't like the cursor keys, then the controls can be changed by altering line 110.)

Any capital letters which are not obviously part of a word or sentence are user-defined graphics characters. These are in codes 50, 60, 190, 200, 520, 620, 840, 850, 870, 1060, 180, 3080.



A LA CARTE

## Variables used

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| x,y      | — co-ordinates<br>of waiter<br>during the<br>game     |
|          | — current level                                       |
| sc       | — total score   |
| hi       | — high score  |
| tf       | — countdowns<br>shown on<br>the tables                |
| s£(4,40) | — meals on<br>order                                   |
| m£       | — meal you are<br>carrying                            |
| w1,w2,w3 | — used for<br>manic tea<br>trolley                    |
| me       | — number of<br>meals<br>delivered                     |
| x£       | — picture of<br>waiter (with<br>or without a<br>meal) |
| z        | — ATTR of<br>place you<br>want to<br>move to          |
| ll       | — used for loop<br>in the main<br>game                |
| xx,yy    | — used for<br>saving the<br>old x,y<br>values         |
| v,w,etc  | — general<br>purpose<br>variables                     |

```

2040 IF INKEY$="" THEN GO TO 304
3050 CLS PRINT "You cannot de-  
iver the wrong meal to a fat  
old lady. If you do, they'll  
get their minds!" "Extra Points  
will be awarded if you wash your  
hands in the gentscloakroom to  
the left of the cafe."
3060 PRINT "The meal you are ca-  
rrying will be displayed in the  
centre of the screen." "Use the  
cursor keys to steer  
the waiter." "Mind out for  
and manic tea trolleys which  
will kill you." PRESS AN E
3070 IF INKEY$="" THEN GO TO 307
3080 CLS PRINT "A large  
table in the dining room is  
set up as a snack bar. INT  
H is a waiter. INT  
M is a man; tea  
trolley. PAPER 1 is  
REF. INT D is the washbasin
3090 PRINT "There are more than  
this first dinner level. Please don't  
forget to bring the other  
dishes. Good luck." "Good luck."
3100 IF INKEY$="" THEN GO TO 310
3110 RETURN

```



## No.3 RIVER RAID (Activision)

YOU CAN easily imagine professional fighter pilots turning pale and mumbling excuses when faced with Carol Shaw's *River Raid*. On the face of it, a suicide mission if ever there was one. This is a one-way river all right.

You are, collectively and individually, the pilot(s) of five low-flying, heavily armed marine attack aircraft, and your mission is to fly at nought feet up an endless branching fjord filled with the paraphernalia of war. Battleships steaming to and fro; fuel tankers; tanks; helicopters; jet aircraft and of course a series of bridges, each of which you must take out before you can continue your breakneck low-level mission.

Your mission is, simply, to blast as much as you can.

Isn't it always?

Nought feet is very low. You can fly over *nothing* and when objects in your path — like oddly nimble battleships — move to intercept you, you must either dodge or blow them away — because if you don't you fly smack into the side, pal, and that's where you lose one of the five-man team. Other hazards include mobile AA that shoots at you from the banks and bridges — the width of the banks varies amazingly, the River getting narrower the further you ascend it — and the unexpected appearances, after about Bridge 7, of phantom-like jet fighters.

Later still you get the fast helicopter gunships.

### TRAPPED AT ZERO FEET

You measure your ascent by bridges. These are the only regular feature in a fjord-like configuration that branches endlessly into islands and sub-waterways, some of these very narrow indeed. Sometimes these channels will be filled by enemy vehicles; at other times they will be empty save for the striped fuel tanks.

The fuel, embarrassingly, is collected by flying over it. (Oh well.) You keep track of your tank state by means of a gauge, and bells sound when the fuel gets low.

And get this. No matter what gets in your way — what unlikely or totally credible combination of enemy war machines should appear — you can never rise above nought feet. So to help you manoeuvre out of what can look like impossible situations, your

## ONE WAY DOWN THE RIVER OF DEATH



attack plane has massive air brakes that enable it to pull hi-G turns, as well as afterburners for that often-needed last-minute burst of speed.

Your armament, thankfully, seems infinite. A regular stream of armour-piercing rockets pours away with satisfying speed. Warships, beetle-like wandering helicopters, stationary fuel dumps ... all disintegrate on the instant when clobbered by these magnificent air-to-ground missiles, so powerful that even bridges disintegrate on impact.

The earliest bridge-to-bridge killing zones are the easiest. Ships lie stationary and choppers hover dully, like bored flies. All fall prey to your jinking low-level fighter, flaps full on, pulling hi-G zigzags from bank to bank, blasting the enemy's property into scrap, and flying blithely through the tumbling ruins. Fuel dumps are common as muck, and as your fuel is still high you blast these contemptuously, content to collect the few lousy points they represent. The first bridge can be taken out at leisure — you even have time to pick off a couple more helicopters before flying through into the next open reach of River.

By now the defences are waking up and things are starting to happen. A great cruiser pulls into your path just as you approach; a swift salvo and he

vanishes in flame, but now here is a helicopter doing the same. A quick shot — he goes down — and a swerve past another chopper ... a shot at a fuel dump ... another, which misses, at a battleship — and you're past the first wave of defences and faced with a choice of routes.

The arm on the right is narrower, and involves a tighter turn to enter, but is relatively free from enemy, and moreover possesses two unguarded fuel dumps. (We are beginning to need fuel.) The one to port is wider, but more thickly peopled with enemies.

### SCORES, AWARDS AND MORE...

You hesitate too long, attempt the right-hand arm of the river, blow the turn, and pile into the island cliff. One down.

Next man starts from the last bridge passed. Pretty soon you are at Bridge Seven, and the enemy jets have showed up.

They come in fast, from left to right (or the other way around), pale blue ghosts that come right at you and can only be downed by good deflection shooting — and if not downed must be dodged by skilled flying. Avoiding them, you come into range of the banks, where mobile AA starts firing. They get your range very quickly, so if you see them landing salvos ahead but in line ... change your line fast. If you see them on the bridge, blast the bridge.

You can score very highly indeed at *River Raid*. There are reports of a million being scored. Certainly Carol Shaw's game, designed for and marketed by the US company Activision, has all the ingredients of compulsiveness. It is one of the very best — if not the best — of the vertical scrollers; the *Defender* of Up-and-down Land.

The game appeared originally in the UK early last year as an Atari VCS ROM, having already won countless awards from the US Game industry. Last Christmas it turned up as a ROM for Atari computers.

It is, of course, as we said, and as they always are, a suicide mission. Sooner or later your fuel gives out, or you misjudge a tight turn, and fly smack into something. Then it's over and you're left with a score which won't go halfway to telling the full story of all the sweat and terror of your last mission up the River of Death.

TONY TYLER

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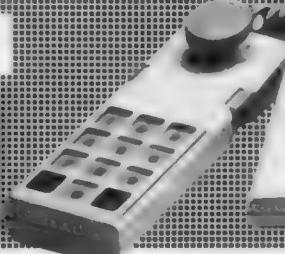
SPECTRUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	ORIC 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	ZX 81	<input type="checkbox"/>	VIC 20	<input type="checkbox"/>	APPLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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## HARDWARE REVIEW

# NOT EXACTLY YOUR GARDEN OF EDEN

Does the Coleco Adam live up to its hype?  
TONY TYLER tells all



THE COLECOVISION ADAM was launched with a tremendous amount of brouhaha last summer, at the Chicago Consumer Electronics Show. Easily the most glitz of all the incredibly glitz stands, the Coleco operation featured half-hourly showings inside a smoke-filled booth wherein lasers played over face and body of a whole team of blondes who each delivered a setpiece spiel. Every now and again said blonde would delicately touch a slim, elegant ivory-coloured keyboard with a single red-painted talon.

This, we were told (at half-hourly intervals), was the Coleco Adam. The CBS-affiliated monster, having in the previous two years wiped the floor with the dedicated videogame opposition, was now unveiling its all-in-one machine designed to clean up the Stateside home computer market.

What we were looking at was a mockup — nothing new in that of course. And boy! Did it look promising! Slimline detachable keyboard, revised stringy-floppy data storage system AND a printer. We never saw the data storage doing its stuff, and we

never got to see or hear the printer in operation. But who cared? The whole package was going to retail before last autumn at about \$600. At that price, and if everything worked, within 18 months or so the Adam would undoubtedly be THE system for the US domestic computer revolution.

It was also games-based; you could actually use Colecovision ROMS as well as stringy-floppy versions of top arcade games.

Time passed

Adam didn't arrive on schedule. Again, nothing new in that, as we all know. But over here we began to hear rumours. Coleco, it was said, had blown it badly. The system was late, the price was now considerably higher (above \$1000) and, worst of all, there were major deficiencies in the package.

Still, it had looked good. This writer at least reserved judgment.

Until now.

The version of Adam we here at BIG K finally received was the Module 3 version, different to the standalone Adam inasmuch as the package — data storage, keyboard and SmartWriter

printer — comes as a plug-in expansion to the existing Coleco video games console. As a result its footprint is truly colossal.

Switching on — the main power switch is sensibly placed behind the printer — puts you into electronic typewriter mode. Hitting the ESCAPE/WP key gives you the built-in wordprocessor.

Taking these first: the keyboard is good-looking and poised at a pleasant angle. The keys themselves are chunky and positive. In fact, the only really irritating fault is the lack of an LED to tell you when Shift or Control Lock is on (also the weird duplication of keys, such as Backspace and Cursor-left, which perform identically so far as I can see). The real trouble is with the software and the printer.

Typing in electronic typewriter mode is an awesome and infuriating business, made unbearable by the unbelievable noise of the daisywheel printer. I've heard it described as "like bamboo tearing". To me, it closely resembles the evening song of the AK47s as the Druze and Phalange militiamen blast the wotsits out of each other in Beirut. Living with this printer in your home would be a nightmare. And it's SLOW: when you're on-line (in typewriter mode) the pistol shot of each printer stroke comes about half a second after you've typed the character in question, which is fantastically disorientating.

Moving into wordprocessor mode, you see on-screen the rather childish and archaic platen roll icon (your working area) embellished by six labels each

representing a function for the six function keys (constantly redefined — rather like Apricot's microscreen but not half so elegant). However, useless amenities aside (like changing the colour of the screen from Nasty to Horrible) it does work, even if it is slow and childish. In fact, it's a pretty good toy wordprocessor.

Adam is a Clean Machine in terms of built-in languages. SmartBasic (for which read Applesoft) loads in via the unusual high-speed (it says here) stringy-floppy arrangement. Eventually it appears and you can start programming. As I said, no surprises with the Basic itself; it's pretty comprehensive and at least half-way to being structured. Maximum four-colour resolution is 256x159 (HG with four lines of text, HG2 without). Which is not exactly scintillating — but by using USR routines I assume you can bodge a higher degree of resolution than that.

Colours are pure Coleco — vivid, not to say lurid, and quite easily accessible with the COLOR= statement. The full palette is 16, which is better than most.

What is profoundly irritating is the lack of user RAM in Basic 80K, you've heard? Well, surely that must mean at least a genuine 64? Load Basic, type PRINT FRE(O) and you get 25 and a half K's to play with. Again, not bad compared with some machines, but far, far less than advertised.

## VERDICT

ONE DOESN'T want to come down too heavily on this computer. Unfortunately you can't always have what you want. Definite plus points are the keyboard, which in the main is elegant, easy to use and well-furnished with dedicated keys. Commands like PRINT, DELETE, etc. can be handled via a planned

Screen display in wordprocessor mode. Monitor is not included in the Adam package.



The infamous SmartWriter. Ear protection is advised.



# LET'S GET FIZ-ICAL...

RICHARD TAYLOR gets to grips with Primordial Peripheral's disc drive for the 48K Spectrum.

I SUPPOSE IT WAS inevitable that someone, sooner or later would come up with a proper disc drive for the Spectrum. Even though Sinclair have launched their famous Microdrive, its distinct lack of availability (now being eased by limited shop sales) and relatively slow access speed (compared to a real disc system) have prevented its domination of the Spectrum mass storage system market.

There is something of a price gap, however, because the 'real disc system' under examination here will set you back nearly £250, close to the cost of two new 48K Spectrums, the only model this drive will work with.

The FIZ system (Floppy disc drive and Interface for the ZX Spectrum, would you believe) comes in two units, the drive itself and, connected by 50cm of ribbon cable, the interface box which plugs into the back of the Spectrum.

The interface contains quite a large assortment of chips powered by an extra voltage regulator — there to ease the load on the Spectrum's already overworked and overheated internal regulator. The disc unit (a Shugart for those who must know) has a separate mains connection, so you may need a 2-way mains adaptor if you're suffering from 'clogged-up' power sockets — and what hacker isn't these days? The 9 volt plug from the Spectrum's own power supply goes into the back of the interface box, the old socket being concealed by the interface.

Switch on and the disc whirs into life. Instead of the usual Sinclair copyright line the screen clears with the message **FIZZ S3/540.4 OPERATING FIRMWARE - 1983 Macronics Systems Ltd**. There's no loading or saving of the DOS (Disc Operating System) from tape as the necessary software is held in an EPROM.

On power up the contents of the EPROM is transferred to the top 4K of the Spectrum's RAM. With a further 4K being used by the DOS for temporary storage, the top 8K of RAM is technically rendered unusable.

This could've been a major drawback to the system, making useless many programs that rely on that top 8K for certain functions. However, Primordial supply a formatted-disc that carries a special program called 'lodos'.

The program is called up by the command **dos**, thus the instruction **PRINT USR dos** transfers the DOS from high to low memory. Pretty neat!

The DOS itself relies heavily on BASIC variables and **USR** calls. After switching on the Spectrum the variables **as**, **bs**, **cs**, **dir**, **back**, **al**, **bl**, **cl**, **zap** and **nd** are initialised to the

addresses of machine code routines in the DOS. So, for instance, **PRINT USR dir** gives a list of what is on the disc — as well as an indication of the amount of storage capacity and the main disc title. The **USR** statement returns the number of any error that might have occurred and there is a comprehensive and helpful set of error codes.

The DOS has facilities to save and load BASIC programs, machine code programs (there's an auto-run facility for machine code) and arrays. It is also possible to format new discs, erase files or make back-up copies of discs. Some commands need filenames or other parameters passed to them. This is done by assigning the BASIC variable **fs** with the name before typing in the **USR** statement. For instance, **LET fs="Graph"; PRINT USR bs** saves a BASIC program onto a disc called "Graph". The commands can be used equally as well in programs as they do as direct commands.

The drive uses single-sided, single density discs, each one capable of 109K of user-available storage. A disc is formatted using the **nd** command.

One of the 40 tracks on the disc is used by the DOS to store the directory, leaving the user with 39 tracks, each one with a capacity of 2816 odd bytes. One of the idiosyncrasies of the system is that a file will occupy at least a complete track even if it is only a few bytes in length — therefore placing a maximum limit of 39 files per disc.

The actual operation of the disc was extremely fast and reliable. The documentation, although brief, was adequate and well presented.

The FIZ system represents value for money if you use your Spectrum for program development or for some sort of data handling. I suspect, however, that the majority of users do not desperately need the added flexibility (and expense) of a proper disc system and would probably do better with a Microdrive.

The system will come into its own when more software is available to run on it. Some games material is available but, as I said, the price tag makes the FIZ a games system in the 'executive toy' class. Primordial have recently announced a word processing disc (based on the old 'Tasman' WP) and have an assembler in the works.

FIZ costs £249.95 from Primordial Peripherals Ltd., 89 Herne Road, Bushey, Herts. WD2 3LP. The interface unit can be bought as a separate item for use with other disc drives, price £79.95.



sequence of strokes with an abundance of ARE YOU SUREs sprinkled at each stage. The adaptation of the Coleco keypad controller to serve as a numeric keypad is economic, though the Adam's ivory colour scheme and the jet black of the game console don't go too well together (and the joystick is virtually impossible to use when clipped down). The keyboard is detachable.

And that's about it on the plus side.

Against the machine are the pitiful RAM (pitiful when compared with what should be available), the unbelievably ghastly printer, the slowness of the data storage unit — and little touches like the fact that (so far as I can see) you can't clear the screen in Basic without switching off (I'm sure I must be wrong about this but the manual was no help). Associated with this is the way in which a LIST command, in graphics mode, only gives you two lines at a time. To see the list you have to clear out the graphics and to do this you've got to reset (Tell me I'm wrong Coleco).

All in all the Coleco Adam is a major disappointment. Final price for the standalone version had (at time of writing) not been fixed, but seems likely to be in the £600-700 range. That is just simply too much when you consider that for the same money you could have a BBC B plus disc drive plus one of the cheaper monitors.

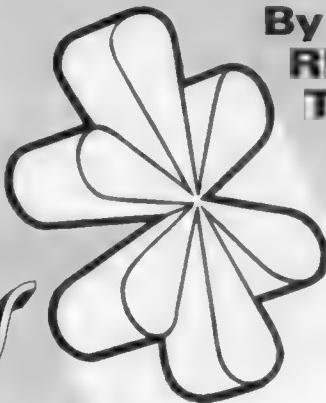
What Coleco did hit upon was the 'music centre' approach, with as many pieces in one budget package as possible. The same idea has clearly occurred to Amstrad, who now offer a genuine 64K, a monitor and orthodox cassette storage for half the Adam's price.

Rumour now has it that the Adam is bombing out in the States. I'm not surprised. Will it do any better over here? I'd be very surprised indeed if it did.

Sorr-ee

# TAYLOR -MADE GRAPHICS

By  
**RICHARD  
TAYLOR**



THE SPECTRUM MANUAL makes no mention of animation or movement, as if it is an area of computer science so unimportant and trivial that it is beneath its notice. Anybody who has seen any arcade-type games on the Spectrum would obviously realise that this is not the case: quite the reverse. Animation and character movement is probably the most important function of any microcomputer — let alone our trusty friend the Spectrum. What would all those Space Invaders, Pac-Men and so on be like if they were utterly motionless?

The movement that can be procured by the use of Sinclair BASIC can hardly be any competition to the marauding groups of fierce aliens elegantly transported around the screen with the use of breathtakingly fast Z80 Machine Code. Fear not because BASIC can equip you with some quite respectable animation if used to its full potential.

By utilising every last idiosyncrasy and short cut of BASIC for the sake of pure speed it is possible to produce animation programs written solely in BASIC which do not smack too highly of its slow speed.

The biggest problem with BASIC is that it does not possess any commands specifically designed with movement in mind. To emulate such commands requires a strange and complicated assortment of PRINT commands, perhaps with the inclusion of the odd colour statement or two.

The usual method of creating movement while using BASIC is to print the object on the screen, wait a while, erase the object by overprinting it with a space character, update its position in a certain way and then go back to the first stage — rather cumbersome but the only real solution. A simple program to perform such a task is as follows:

```
10 LET a=0: REM initial column
20 PRINT AT 10,a;"*": REM Print Character
30 PAUSE 10: REM Wait a bit
40 PRINT AT 10,a;" ": REM Erase character
50 LET a=a+1: GO TO 20: REM Update position
```

An asterisk plods along horizontally from the right to left and eventually disappears off the screen leaving the computer to impatiently reply with the error message "B Integer out of range".

By changing the value of the PAUSE statement residing at line 30 it is indeed possible to change the speed at which the object moves. Removing it altogether gives the asterisk a fair amount of speed, but remember we are only moving one object and not doing anything else besides that one menial task. The next short routine bounces a ball (or rather the letter 'O') around the screen — a more interesting movement:

```
10 LET x=16: LET y=11
20 LET a=1: LET b=-1
30 PRINT AT y,x;"O"
40 PAUSE 3
50 PRINT AT y,x;" "
60 LET x=x-a: IF x>31 OR x<0 THEN LET a=-a: GO TO 60
70 LET y=y+b: IF y>31 OR y<0 THEN LET b=-b: GO TO 70
80 GO TO 30
```

Here the updating section is a lot more complicated and involves checking if the object has violated the boundaries of the screen and, if so, changing its direction.

You may notice the flicker that is beginning to creep into the program. This results from the fact that the object is blanked out and therefore not present on the screen for a comparatively long time due to the added complexity of the position updating part of the program. To overcome this problem it is best to make the program remember the old position of the object before finding out what the new one is going to be, then the old position can be blanked out just before the new one is printed, giving the impression of continuous motion.

Not we have come to something a little more tricky: moving more than one object around the screen at a time. Below is a modified version of the bouncing ball routine which is able to cope with the strains of such animation.

```
10 INPUT "Number of objects?"; num
20 DIM x(num): DIM y(num)
30 DIM a(num): DIM b(num)
40 FOR n=1 TO num
50 LET a(n)=1: LET b(n)=-1
60 LET x(n)=RND*31: LET y=RND*21: NEXT n
70 FOR n=1 TO num
80 LET oldx=x(n): LET oldy=y(n)
90 LET x(n)=x(n)+a(n): IF x(n)>31 OR x(n)<0 THEN LET a(n)=-a(n): GO TO 90
100 LET y(n)=y(n)+b(n): IF y(n)>21 OR y(n)<0 THEN LET b(n)=-b(n): GO TO 100
110 PRINT AT oldy,oldx;" "
120 PRINT AT y(n),x(n); "O"
130 NEXT n
140 GO TO 70
```

This program utilises arrays to store the co-ordinates and direction of each of the objects and uses a FOR/NEXT loop to update the positions of each of the objects in turn. Notice how the old position of each object, in turn, is held in (oldx,oldy) while the new position is calculated. The old position can then be overprinted immediately before the object is re-printed, avoiding any flicker. You can demonstrate the sluggish speed of BASIC if you enter a biggish number when the computer prompts you for the number of objects that are to be moved.

One of the biggest problems with Sinclair BASIC is that you are restricted to printing in the character grid of 32 columns and 22 rows. To produce smooth moving graphics you need to be able to make full use of the Spectrum's high resolution capabilities and be able to print anywhere on the high resolution grid of 256 x 176 pixels. Next month I will be presenting a short machine code program to do just that. I'll also be looking at much more complicated subjects such as acceleration and complex movement patterns.

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for ORIC  
by KEVIN FREEMAN

```

1 CLS:POKE618,10:HS=0
10 GOSUB1000
14 M=34:N=2:X=12:Y=23:Z=X:C=Y
16 PAPER4:INK7:CLS
18 FL=1750:MS=200:SC=0:SS=76:HH=16
20 PLOT0,0,16:PLOT0,1,16
22 PLOT38,0,20:PLOT38,1,20
24 A2$="ahija":B2$=" g"
26 A3$=" k":B3$="olmno"
28 FORI=16TO26:PLOT1,I,18:NEXT
30 FORI=3TO26:PLOT1,I,3:NEXT
32 PLOT21,0,1:PLOT21,1,5
34 PLOT21,0,4:PLOT1,1,6
36 PLOT1,0,4:PLOT1,1,6
100 REM.....CONTROL.....
102 REPEAT:SOUND4,40,6:PLAY0,7,7,0
110 Q$=KEY$
112 IFQ$=""THENGOTO150
115 IFQ$=","THENX=X+2
120 IFQ$=".,"THENX=X-2
125 IFQ$="Z"THENY=Y-2:HH=HH+1
130 IFQ$="A"THENY=Y+2:HH=HH+1
145 IFQ$=""THENGOSUB400
150 GOSUB200
152 FL=FL-1:IFFL<0THENFL=0
155 PLOT2,0,"FUEL " "
156 PLOT11,0,RIGHT$(" "+STR$(FL),4)
160 PLOT22,0,"SCORE " "
162 PLOT31,0,RIGHT$(" "+STR$(SC),4)
165 PLOT2,1,"MISSILES: "
167 PLOT11,1,RIGHT$(" "+STR$(MS),3)
170 PLOT22,1,"HI-SCORE: "
175 PLOT31,1,RIGHT$(" "+STR$(HS),4)
178 IFMS<20THENPLOT1,1,12
180 IFFL<100THENPLOT1,0,12
181 PLOT20,0,B:PLOT20,1,B
185 IFMS=0THENFL=0
190 UNTILFL=0
195 PLAY0,0,0,0:GOT0700
200 REM
205 PLOTZ+2,C-1," "
210 PLOTZ,C," "
215 PLOTZ,C+1," "
220 A1$=" d":B1$="abeca"
225 C$=" "
240 X=X-INT(RND(1)*3):X=X+INT(RND(1)*3)
250 Y=Y+INT(RND(1)*2):Y=Y-INT(RND(1)*2)
260 IFX>33THENX=33
262 IFX<2THENX=2
264 IFY>23THENY=23
266 IFY<3THENY=3
268 IFY<8THENA1$=A2$:B1$=B2$:C$="f"
270 IFY>13THENA1$=A3$:B1$=B3$
272 PLOTX+2,Y-1,C$
274 PLOTX,Y,A1$
275 PLOTX,Y+1,B1$
280 Z=X:C=Y:FL=FL-1
284 PLOT16,6,[" "]:PLOT16,16,"[!]"
286 PLOT11,11,"[-":PLOT22,11,"-"]
288 IFHH>25THENHH=25
289 IFHH<5THENHH=5

```



Ah, Roger, Oric base. Have the rogue bird in my sights. Understand need for direct hit to engine port to down enemy. Intelligence briefing showed effects of attack on other parts of rogue negligible. Beginning my run now. Fuel and missiles should just get me through. Ah, this is Thunder 5 — wish me luck ..

```

290 PLOT0,HH,18:PLOT0,HH-1,20
300 RETURN
400 REM.....MISSILES...
401 GOSUB200
402 PLOT17,6,"+":PLOT17,16,"+"
403 PLOT12,11,"+":PLOT22,11,"+"
404 SOUND4,1,9,
405 FORJ=26TO14STEP-3
410 PLOTM,J,"\""
415 PLOTN,J,"/"
420 PLOTM,J," "
422 PLOTN,J," "
424 M=M-3:N=N+3
425 NEXT
430 M=34:N=2:FL=FL-1:MS=MS-2:SS=SS-2
432 IFSCRN(16,J)=98THENGOSUB600:
435 PLOT17,11,"p"
440 SOUND4,40,6:PLAY0,7,7,0
450 PLOT17,J," "
499 RETURN
600 REM.....HIT.....
601 SOUND4,10,0:PLAY0,7,5,4
605 PLOTX,Y," pp "
606 PLOTX,Y+1,"p p p "
610 WAIT15:SOUND4,3500,0
615 PLOTX,Y,"p p p "
620 PLOTX,Y+1," p pp "
625 WAIT15:PLAY1,7,5,7
630 PLOTX,Y," "
635 PLOTX,Y+1," "
645 WAIT15:SOUND4,30000,0
650 SC=SC+150+SS
655 IFHS<8CTHENHS=SC
660 SS=75:X=27:Y=20
665 PLAY0,7,7,0
699 POP:RETURN
700 REM.....END OF GAME.....
705 PLOT12,8,"DISENGAGE"
708 WAIT150
710 CLS
715 PAPER0
720 PRINTCHR$(12):INK1
730 PRINTCHR$(4):CHR$(27)"J
R ":"PRINTCHR$(4)

```

FIGHTER

# FIGHTER

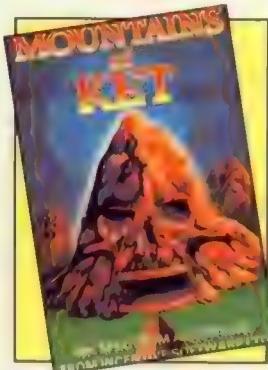


```
140 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:"YOUR SCORE  
141 W$":SC  
142 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT;"PRESS 'Y' TO PLAY  
143 AGAIN"  
144 755 PRINTSPC(6) :"N" TO STOP"  
145 760 REPEAT:0$=KEY$:UNTILQ$="Y":ORQ$="N"  
146 780 IF Q$="Y" THEN GOTO14  
147 790 FIND  
148 800 REM  
149 810 FOR I=46856 TO 46983:READ W:R0K1,W:NF  
150 XT  
151 811 DATA0,0,0,0,63,63,0,0  
152 812 DATA0,0,3,3,63,63,0,0  
153 813 DATA0,0,48,48,63,63,0,0  
154 814 DATA0,12,12,12,12,63,12,12  
155 815 DATA30,63,63,51,33,33,18,17  
156 816 DATA0,0,0,0,0,12,12,12  
157 817 DATA63,30,12,12,0,0,0,0,0
```

```
1148 DATA0,0,1,0,63,63,7,1  
1149 DATA12,12,63,18,33,33,33,18  
1150 DATA0,0,32,0,63,63,56,32  
1151 DATA12,12,12,30,18,18,63,63  
1152 DATA1,7,63,63,0,1,0,0  
1153 DATA59,59,59,59,13,55,18,30  
1154 DATA32,56,63,63,0,32,0,0  
1155 DATA0,0,63,63,0,0,0,0  
1156 DATA36,8,0,33,8,0,1,0  
1200 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT  
1201 PAPER0:INK1  
1205 PRINTSPC(12)CHR$(4);CHR$(27)"NF1()"  
TER":PRINTCHR$(4)  
1210 PRINT:PRINT"SHOOT DOWN AS MANY ENEMY  
MY AIRCRAFT"  
1215 PRINT"AS YOU CAN BEFORE YOU RUN OUT  
T OF FUEL"  
1220 PRINT"OR MISSILES"  
1230 PLOT12,14,"CONTROLS"  
1235 PLOT12,16,"UP... (A)"  
1240 PLOT12,17,"DOWN. (Z)"  
1245 PLOT12,18,"RIGHT(.)"  
1250 PLOT12,19,"LEFT. (,)"  
1255 PLOT12,20,"FIRE. (SPACE BAR)"  
1260 PLOT10,10,"PRESS SPACE TO START"  
1270 W$=KEY$  
1275 IF W$="" "THENCLS:RETURN  
1280 GOTO1270
```



CURRENTLY causing much consternation on the Big K campus is a deceptively tricky adventure called *Mountains of Ket*, from Incentive Software, which runs on a 48K Spectrum. This traditional text-only epic is the first of a proposed trilogy set in the mythical land of Ket, a familiar-sounding suburb full of Orcs, Ogres and other routine 'Obgoblins.



It boasts both a commendably strong plot and a pot full of puzzles that run a gamut of difficulty. Apparently Ket, long troubled by feuding warlords and the like, has been thrust into uncharacteristic unity by some attacks from beyond the mountains;

the work, it seems, of a band of mad, marauding monks. You've been summoned by the Lords of Ket to sort these beggars out. Some task! To ensure that you at least try to complete this hazardous mission, the Lords have kindly grafted Edgar, an assassin bug, into your neck. Try and do a bunk and the little devil will sink his poisoned pegs into your tender parts.

Despite the standard Sword & Sorcery format, *Ket* offers up a number of refreshing twists. Take the opening sequence for instance. As you saunter into the local village it's a fair bet that most players, conditioned by the senseless slaughter of similar games, will draw their swords and begin hacking away at the earliest opportunity. Here, however, such antisocial behaviour reaps its own rewards. The inhabitants will, as a man, set about you with ill-disguised glee. Better by far to sheath your sword and attempt to barter. There are a number of items that can be bought, all of which will prove of use once you've entered the mountains. Although it must be said that with what appears to be a village inhabited solely by grumpy pensioners ("Speak up sonny, I'm a

little deaf!" and "I've no time for idle chatter!" being typical replies) it's extremely tempting to swing that sword and remove a few heads.

Although primarily a puzzle adventure the game features an effective combat routine based on the Dungeons and Dragons slugger system. Upon starting the game you'll be allocated points for Prowess, Energy and Luck, and these, come a punch-up, are compared against the statistics of your opponent. The 'puter then plays out the battle in a series of rounds. You're given a running commentary on the slashes and thrusts along with opportunities to either dodge or run. It's an effective and well presented routine that adds considerable punch (no pun intended) to the proceedings. As a general rule it's best to avoid crossing swords with those with a higher prowess rating. Just swallow your pride and do a runner; that way you'll get to see more of the game.

I'm currently stuck before a wall which I'm told is in 'mint condition'. The clue here is presumably 'Polo', so obviously (?) there's a hole in the wall somewhere. Just a question of sussing out where, I guess...

NOW SHOULD you be tired of all this D&D style adventuring Salamander Software offer an entertaining alternative in the shape of *Wings of War* (which runs on the Dragon 32/64). Set in France, circa WW2, you get to play an officer in some sort of secret task force who's (been) volunteered to infiltrate an occupied chateau. Apparently the krauts (no offense chaps) have developed a secret weapon and the Brits want it. The mission begins with a descent by parachute

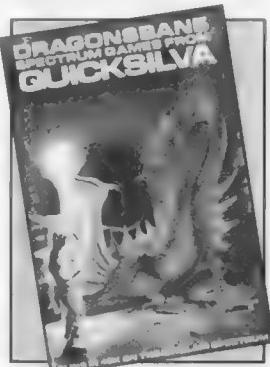


into the wood near the chateau. Unfortunately a rough landing scatters your equipment as you land. Not the best of omens.

## Steve Keaton's Adventure Column

*Wings* is a text adventure using a formatted display. On the left hand side of the screen is a description of your current location and on the right a list of all the items you're currently carrying. There's also a turn count and direction guide as well as a small scrolling input window. The adventure itself is pretty friendly. There seem to be no sudden death routines (thank goodness) and quiet humour abounds. While exploring one of the floors in the chateau I found myself in the commandant's office. Thinking quickly I typed in SAY HEIL HITLER and was duly awarded with a security pass. I then turned on my heels and promptly walked into a large cupboard. The commandant was

a 48K Spectrum from Quicksilva) is enormously impressive. It's a 'true' graphical adventure that thankfully doesn't involve zapping everything that moves, although I must confess that the plot is a little ho-hum. Trapped within Castle Earthstone you must outwit the



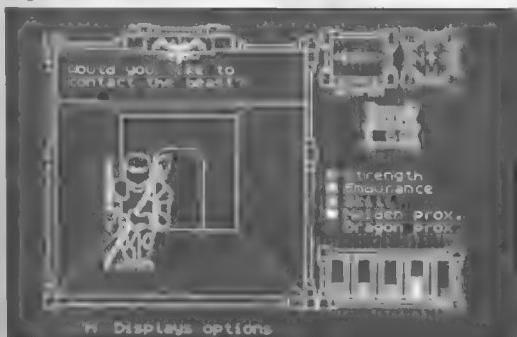
dread Dragon Lords and rescue the beautiful Princess Paula. Still the hoary old story is more than compensated for by a stylish presentation.

You move through the castle's great halls using the cursor keys, picking up artefacts and battling such hideous adversaries as vampires, ghouls and (shriek) giant pigeons. There are 172 locations to visit and 40 species of well-drawn monster to avoid, not to mention a brace of randomly generated trapdoors. It's a true graphic adventure.

## IS LOVE and a Polo

only mildly amused. *Wings* is spiffing stuff and a sequel entitled *The White Cliffs of Dover* is promised soon.

I MUST confess to being generally nonplussed by the recent spate of hybrid arcade adventures. The likes of the chart-bustin' *Atic Atac* fall between too many stools for my taste. However, *Dragonsbane* (which runs on



### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

FINALLY, if you have any favourite adventures why not write in and tell us (a) what they are, and (b) why you like them. Perhaps you've unearthed some curious bugs you can share or maybe you're just plain stuck somewhere! Whatever the reason, write in. We wanna hear from you.

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- 1 SPRITE GENERATOR PROGRAMS to create your own sprite designs. All 16 colours may be used in each design with characters as small as one pixel or as large as the 24 x 24 pixel SUPERSPRITE. As you design the sprites they are automatically stored in the machine code control routine so that you can delete the generator program before writing your own Basic.
- 2 UPTO 48 SPRITES ON SCREEN with 12 separate sprite designs, each with 3 independently controlled clones.
- 3 INSTANT ANIMATION with two images in each sprite design. These are switched automatically as the sprite crosses the screen allowing effects such as hopping frogs, running men etc.
- 4 COLLISION DETECTOR with a hit flag that is set to the number of any sprite overlapping with the sprite just moved. When the sprites move apart there is no disruption of the sprite character designs.
- 5 ENLARGEMENT FACILITY of <2 x 3, <4 x 5 magnification of the sprite size! Let your invaders loom out of the screen in 3D effects - or use enlarged sprites throughout your program!
- 6 FOUR PRESET FLIGHT PATHS designed from the generator programs. Each path has 8 definable directions with up to 255 steps allowed in each direction. Once sprites have been allocated to a path they will move automatically as your program runs.
- 7 Both EOR and TRANSFER plotting of sprites to the screen are available.
- 8 A SPRITE LIBRARY has sprite designs ready for use in your programs with books such as GHOSTS and MEN.

- 9 SPRITE POSITION COORDINATE VARIABLES which are reset automatically by the control coding as the sprite crosses a screen boundary. As you move your designs the old images left behind are deleted automatically as well.

This amazing package includes control routines containing different combinations of the above features - choose the routine best suited to the program you want to write. A comprehensive colour manual, an introduction program and two arcade style demonstration games are also included in the package. Compatibility with all other BBC make our animation routines ideal for serious programmers - and we won't claim royalties on programs you market using sprites!

N.B. Disc version may be bought on cassette for transfer to disc.

**SUPERFRUIT** £5.95 for the BBC 32K, Electron

£12.95 on 40 or 80 track disc

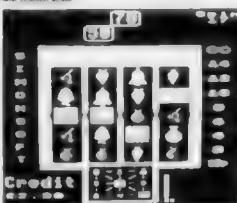
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You would be fully justified in claiming that it is better than the real thing! - M Field Oxford

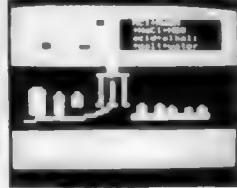


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# JOBS: Now the

**STEVEN JOBS, along with a partner, founded Apple Computer ten years ago. Today he's worth a quarter of a billion dollars. PAUL WALTON spoke to the Man behind the trail-blazing Macintosh.**

STEVE JOBS sold his VW Beetle car and cancelled a visit to India back in '75 to start Apple Computer with his mate, a boffin called Steve Wozniak (featured in April issue of BIG K). It paid off. Apple's now a billion-dollar company and he owns about a quarter of it.

While it was Wozniak's idea to build the Apple II — that's since sold two million around the world — Jobs came up with the next bright idea. He's the man credited with bringing *mice* cursors, multiple *window* screens and *icons* — or visual representations of objects first to the Lisa and now to the cheaper Macintosh.

'I believe in giving people great products as cheaply as possible,' bubbles Jobs, as he outlines the 'goodies' up-and-coming from Apple in the near future. (See the box.)

Steve is twenty-eight years old, spends most of his life playing with computers, or improving his tennis. He dropped out of college to trek to India when he was 18 and is a vegetarian. Oh, and by the way, he's worth going on for 250 million dollars!

You've only got to listen to the things he says to know that Steve Jobs doesn't care what people think. Thanks to his success, he doesn't have to ...

About promoting the Mac: 'If we could get a picture of the Queen using one, hell, I'm sure they'd sell. We're not a slogans company. Mac is supposed to be the computer for the rest of us, but royalty might help ...'

### **IBM want to crush us — they want us dead!**

About IBM, his major rivals: 'If it wasn't for us IBM would own all the PC market, though they don't deserve to. IBM just want to crush us — they want us dead!'

On computers generally: 'Most are just a load of junk. The game in computers is now over — software, games and leisure software, business packages, graphics ... that's where it's at today. I wouldn't build an Apple II today, I'd write a neat piece of software.'

'We think there have been two standards in our industry — and that's all. The Apple II in '77 and the IBM PC in '81. The whole industry is converging on those two. We think that the Apple II operating system is a standard. There are more of them out there than any other computer in the world.'

'As you know, last year we achieved approximately \$1000

million revenue. That was primarily Apple II. But if we're going to be the major contributors in our industry and remain that throughout this decade — which we absolutely want to do — then we'll need \$10 billion.'

'But we aren't going to sell ten billion dollars worth of Apple IIs a year. The next major growth is going to be the Mac and that type of very advanced machine.'

'We want to sell tens of millions of computers per year. Per year!' he emphasised. 'These PCs won't resemble those we use today. They'll be sold for a few hundred pounds, will have immense storage and processing power and great graphics but the software's going to cost

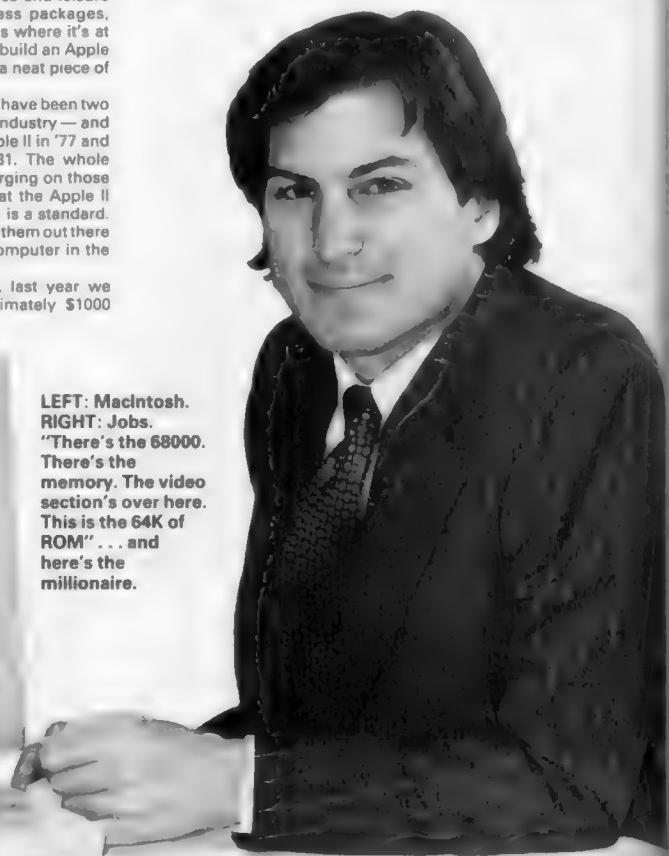
a fortune. Expect to pay twice as much for a good package as you do today.'

But Jobs doesn't think that most other computer suppliers will be around anyway. He thinks that by next year there'll only be the Apple II or the IBM PC selling in volume for businesses, or for the US home market. And then we'll see the age of the dream machine, like his Mac, which offer something a little different.

### **Most computers are a load of junk**

The end of the PC as we know it, in 1984? 'Sure. Other people just slap together some random hardware, go buy an operating

**LEFT: Macintosh.  
RIGHT: Jobs.  
"There's the 68000.  
There's the  
memory. The video  
section's over here.  
This is the 64K of  
ROM" ... and  
here's the  
millionaire.**



# the good news...

system from this or that person, languages from that same guy. They get a piece of junk. Which is what everyone's computer is. But IBM's going to kill most everybody out there. Between them and us there won't be anything else to choose from.'

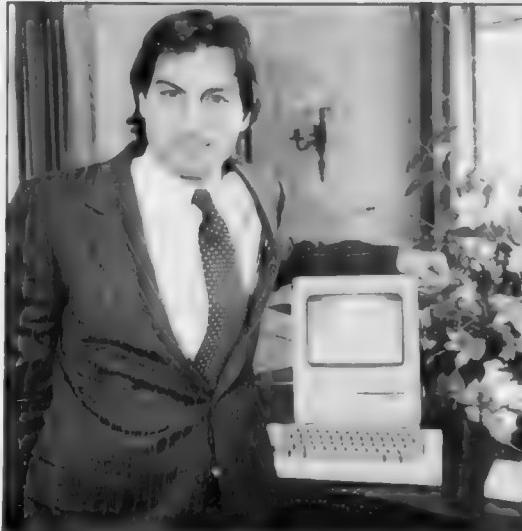
Jobs puts this all down to money — to being able to spend vast sums in developing and building cheap PCs. 'Remember that Apple are a \$1000 million corporation — so are IBM — in terms of personal computers. And there are things that megacorporations can do that other people can't. Like we are spending over \$100 million this year on marketing, about \$100 million on R&D. As is IBM.

'So if we all spend that money wisely how is anybody going to catch up with the Mac or whatever developments IBM has? They're not. So you see both companies are accelerating their investments in those two areas, not pulling back. And all this money, all those PCs already sold, allow Apple and IBM to do something unique.'

**SOFTWARE**, OR the ability to control its production, 'will be critical in 1984,' says Jobs. 'You have to conceive hundreds of software developers to write for your computers. Now these guys don't have the resources to write software for everybody's machines. So they're going to pick one or two. If they make the wrong decision — they'll be out of business.'

'So how do they make their decision? One simple criterion — installed base. And maybe not what it is today, but what will it be in a year. It's the only way that they can make money. There are only two computer companies that have installed base, IBM and Apple.'

What does all this mean for games houses? Jobs reckons that it means a choice between the mass-market, and ultimately



cheaper name-brand machines which IBM and Apple will flog in the millions. 'Other people aren't going to be able to run the software that's developed for our machines — it'll be very difficult. People don't quite realise it yet, but it's going to be quite apparent this year,' he said.

There isn't much love lost between Apple and IBM. 'The IBM PC was the fourth personal computer they developed. So if that was the best of four... IBM has never been a product innovator. Their strategy is to corner the marketplace in what they do best — which service, support and motherhood.'

'In the States there's a battle for hearts and mind that's going on between Apple and IBM. They just want to wipe us off the face of the earth. I think that that's not going to happen. They could buy us — but we're not for sale. We've been having too much fun. We're the only ones

that are going to survive IBM — I really do think that! They're just going to crush everybody else.'

## We're not for sale — we've been having too much fun

So, how does Apple plan to stay ahead? 'We don't design products that market research studies say we should design, that's for sure,' says Jobs. 'That's ridiculous. That's the IBM way.'

'We said that if we shipped 15,000 Macs in the first 100 days we'd be doing very well. It's been 65 days now — how many Macs do you think we've shipped? We've shipped over 40,000 — it's unbelievable. No computer start-up's ever been like this, ever, ever, ever, enthused Jobs.

But what's the reception been like in America? And does he use himself?

which will be truly portable, due for release in 1985.

The Apple II is getting more of the Mac-like features, or windows and icons, to go with the mouse cursor just added. 'We can give Apple II owners a taste of what is to come, and it will be fun.'

It has also been rumoured that Steve Wozniak, lately returned to Apple, is working on a project codenamed Apple V — a hard disc Apple II to match the IBM PC XT.

In time there'll be a fully portable Mac. 'I want to put Macintosh inside a book in

three years, or before, with a flat screen display, mass memory chips... that's one of the reasons we chose a three and a half inch disc drive. It's very small, uses less power. It weighs less. The whole thing might one day fit into a shirt pocket.'

There will be a portable laser printer for under \$5000 (or around £3000), for the first time being 'standalone' and capable of working with any make of PC, which Jobs describes as 'an incredible breakthrough in laser printing'. 'It prints anything to high definition at a speedy

My problem is that I have a Mac at home — but I'm never there. You can't sell forty thousand of something in sixty days without some real use for it. It doesn't happen. We sell 'em \$2500 retail, so that's \$80 million — over a million dollars a day.'

What Apple did with Macintosh was to build a graphics-based machine cheaply, one which works by moving icons around the screen rather than juggling Basic commands in your head!

Jobs is so proud of his Mac that, half-way through the interview, he whips out the motherboard and gives BIG K a technical, guided tour... 'This is the complete Macintosh digital section,' he explains. 'This is the complete 32-bit graphics processing digital computer on one board.'

'There's the 68000. There's the memory. The video section's over here. This is the 64K bytes of ROM. A lot of custom VLSI is in these ROMs. We also have a custom VLSI Disc Controller chip. This is an incredible serial chip which gives up 2 megabits per second serial channels out of the back. Here's the extra disc port. We have a full serial mouse, and a serial keyboard. We have a clock calendar with parameter memory that is battery backed-up. We have four voice sound and speech built into the product.'

'I mean, it's incredible what's on this board. And this is 20 per cent of the parts of an IBM PC. An IBM PC has five times the number of parts and is far less powerful. It does not include many of the features of this board.'

'You add up all these things, and the number of companies that can do all of them — or even half of them — is only one. That's IBM. And the question is, when will they do it? The answer is, I don't know. I think it'll be two or three years away.'

eight A4 pages a minute. It's just awesome.'

And there will also be the launch of APPLEBUS, Apple's local area network.

And on the software front? 'We have two programming languages that we're working on — also be out in the summer — Pascal and Basic,' said Jobs. 'You'll use windows, be able to incorporate graphics in your program. Universities have been going wild at that. Microsoft has their own Basic output — ours is substantially better. You can write a whole bunch of programs at once.'

## APPLE'S NEXT PRODUCTS

This year Apple will launch new members of the Apple II family ('We're spending as much on R&D for the Apple family as we are on the Mac in 1984'), as well as major peripherals and software.

A luggable Apple IIe is coming. 'Really hot stuff — something to keep ACT up nights,' with 256K of memory for under \$1,000. But that's just the beginning for the old 6502-family. There is a 512K Apple IIe being built with further extended Apple DOS



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# WIN a CGL M5 STARTER PACK!

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There is no entry fee but all entries must be on a proper printed coupon cut from BIG K and must bear the entrant's own name, age and address.

Every accepted entry will be examined and the First Prize awarded to the entrant who, in the opinion of the judges, has shown the most skill and judgment in placing the listed factors in the order of appeal to a novice computer user. Remaining prizes will be awarded for the next best entries in order of merit. No entrant may win more than one award.

In the event of a tie or ties for any prize(s) then a further test of skill will be conducted by post between tying competitors to determine the eventual winners or winning order.

All prizes must be accepted as offered. If any winner is aged under 18 then parental consent must be provided before the prize can be awarded.

Any entry received after the closing date will be disqualified as will any received mutilated, illegible, altered, incomplete or not complying with the rules and instructions exactly. No responsibility can be accepted for entries lost or delayed in the post or elsewhere. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of receipt.

The judges' decision and that of the Editor in all other matters affecting the competition will be final and legally binding. No correspondence can be entered into.

The competition is open to all readers in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Eire, the Channel Islands and Isle of Man except employees and their families of IPC Magazines Ltd., the printers of BIG K or of Computer Games Limited.

All winners will be notified and the result published later in BIG K.

### ENTRY COUPON

#### BIG K CGL COMPETITION

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In entering this competition I agree to abide by the rules and to accept the published result as final and legally binding.

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The M5 is a great computer for beginners (check out the features below) and BIG K's top prize comes complete with a "Basic-I" Introduction to Programming cartridge AND the acclaimed "Basic-G" Special Graphics cartridge. Enter the competition now — we've only got one of these fantastic M5 Starter Packs to give away.

## How to Enter

Listed below are eight features of the M5 with "Basic-G" cartridge, all factors which help make this computer so exciting to use. All you have to do is place them in the order you consider they would most appeal to a novice computer user.

Write the key letters of the eight factors — in ink — in the spaces on the entry coupon. For example, if you think that "screen buffers for animated graphics" would be the most appealing then put 'D' in the first space. The letter of your next choice goes in the second space, and so on for all eight.

Complete the coupon with your name, age and address and post your entry to BIG K CGL COMPETITION, 55 EWER STREET, LONDON SE9 9YP, to arrive by the closing date — Tuesday 31st July 1984.

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**DUEL!** continued from page 14



# **DON'T GO THE WRONG WAY NEXT MONTH...**

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two people  
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**£500 SPENDING MONEY!**  
plus  
A trip to the Kennedy Space Centre!

We'll be revealing  
all next month. In the meantime . . .

**WATCH THIS SPACE AND ORDER YOUR  
NEXT MONTH'S COPY OF BIG K NOW!!**

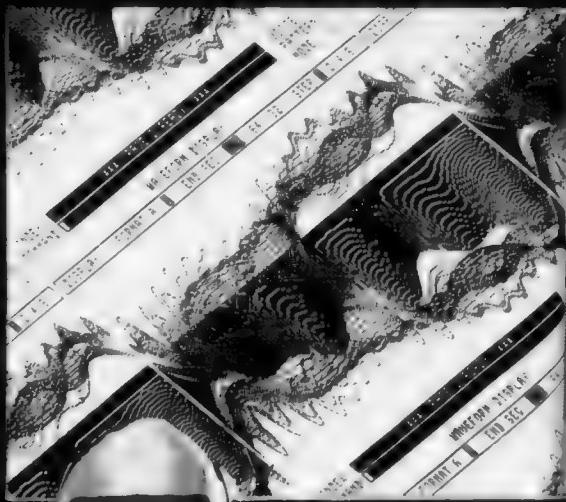
1000



As regular graphics begin to reach their limit on existing microcomputers, creative hackers given to whistling in the bath are turning en masse to the growing potential of computerised music. And the technologies are coming together, too. 'Q' — BIG K's own mystery musician — brings us up to date with the new creative possibilities (and raps our knuckles when we don't learn our scales).

All together now...

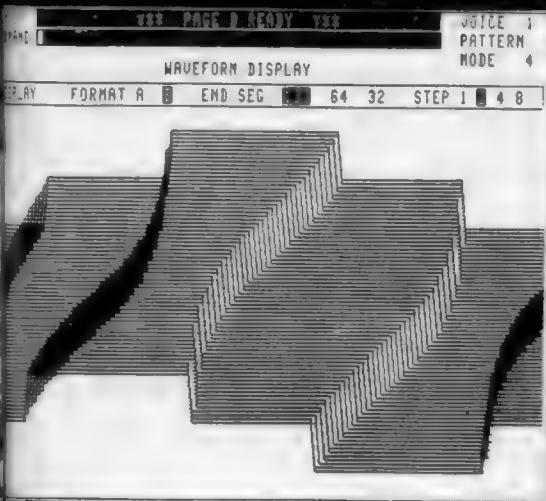
# Music, Maestro. Please



IF YOU'VE ever tried to make music with your micro you probably know that it's OK for squeaking 'Happy Birthday' but there's just no way it can be used for making 12 inch re-mixes. This is

"Q" posing  
with  
Yamaha  
and  
"Nuevo  
Zorro"  
street  
goggles.  
Levis are  
optional.





*The Hills Are Alive...with the Shape of Music! Some of the screens from the Fairlight*

*because most micros only* **use sound to enhance games.**

The good news is MIDI which stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface, and what it means is that music making with your micro has jumped into hyperspace.

Within the next year new MIDI-compatible hardware is going to hit the streets, and in comparison with the cost of Fairlights and Synclaviers (more 'bout them later) at £25,000-£40,000 a throw, this hardware is going to be relatively cheap (prices start around £400). This means that you'll be able to create music on your micro by using MIDI interfaceable hardware and that you will be also be able to run your micro with the BIGGO systems and take advantage of all the latest hardware...drol, drool.

More good news is that some of this new hardware is already available. If you've got a Commodore 64 (hopefully adaptors will become available for Spectrums, Dragons etc) and it is MIDI interfaceable, you'll be able to use a number of MIDI compatible synths on the market.

The problem is that there does not seem to be a lot of software around at the moment so all you hackers out there had better start writing some! Another problem is that not all hard-

ware manufacturers seem to actually know what's going on! Some people have started making MIDI interfaces for some popular synths so that you can hook them up to each other and to micros. The people to

contact with regard to this are Sync Systems — see address at end of article. Hopefully some of you bright sparks will design a bit of hardware which Big K's readers could build cheaply while interfaces for popular micros are still thin on the ground.

**SYNTH HARDWARE** falls into various categories. The first (historically speaking) is the knob-twiddlers' analogue stuff which uses oscillators to create sounds, and modifies them with filters and such like. These synths are either Mono or Polyphonic (single or multiple 'voices'). Most of the older equipment is unable to store made-up sounds in a memory, but most of the new

*For the foot-tapping fraternity too idle to wave a drumstick — the Drumulator from E-Mu*

*Systems. It's the descendant of those rhythm boxes of yore, but does it swing?*

### Built-in

Some of the newer popular synths have built in drum machines and most manufacturers produce drum machines for their own range of models, but there can be problems when trying to hook up the sequencer section of a synth to another manufacturer's drum machine (often the control voltages differ greatly). In this area the new MIDI compatible equipment will be much easier to use though problems are still being sorted out because the standard is so new. So always check equipment before buying.

The sort of equipment outlined — while not producing the most electrifying of sounds — will (when MIDI compatible) enable you and your micro to make some very respectable-sounding music.

The second category of synths are the digital synths and they tend to be very expensive at the moment. This is because of the big memory that is required to store and manipulate sounds digitally. Drum sounds are short, and so digital drum machine are relatively cheaper than music-making digital synths.

One of the first of this type of machine was the Linn Drum and most of the machines on the market seem to follow similar principles of design. The sounds are stored on EPROM and a microprocessor enables you to program sequences. The



ware manufacturers seem to actually know what's going on! Some people have started making MIDI interfaces for some popular synths so that you can hook them up to each other and to micros. The people to

*The Roland MSQ-700 Digital Sequencer. More buttons than a watch-maker, more buttons than a hairdresser. Making use of this particular widget, the aspiring Lloyd Webber types can make playing with oneself into an Art Form. And no, it won't make tea.*



The all-Australian Fairlight, rather more up-market than your actual drummers, it "samples" sounds then represents them digitally; after which, using special disc-based software, it "treats" them. Pricier, though.



ABOVE: The Yamaha DX7  
Synthesizer. It's a  
Programmable  
Algorithmic Synthesizer.

advantage of these machines over their cousins (analogue drum machines) is that the sound chips are digital recordings of real drums and since many new machines have great 'pitch control' some really amazing sounds can be created and programmed.

Programs may also be stored on cassette. Although many use various sync systems to enable them to be played with some types of synth not many are at present MIDI interfaceable, though this should change quite soon.

### Digital

Other major types of digital synth are those that sample (i.e. record) and manipulate sounds digitally. One of the most popular is the Emulator ... that's the one you tend to hear most of on *Top of the Pops*. Basically these synths digitally record (using microphone or direct input) any sound and transpose it to a keyboard in either mono or polyphonic mode. They also enable you to create your own library of sounds on floppy disc. Even more advanced are the PPG's, Synclaviers and Fairlights — instruments that enable you to digitally record sound and then to manipulate and combine sounds with the aid of special software. These synths also enable you to compose by storing sequences of notes and allow you to edit these sequences together.



LEFT: The Roland MC-262 Sequencer. Using the MIDI-compatible interface — a sort of musician's MSX Basic — all these gadgets and gizmos newer to arrive will hopefully be linkable with even your average domestic micro. THEM... and your heart out, Andre Previn!

cally aimed at music making which uses the same plug-in ROM as their keyboards.

If you've been watching TV lately you will have noticed a thing called a Fairlight CMI (computer musical instrument). It's been featured in a number of music related programmes. This beast is in a class all of its own (though some might argue otherwise) so I thought we'd go into some more detail on this lovely (hands off!) expensive bit of Australian hardware.

Australian? Yep, that's right. The Fairlight comes from Down Under and legend has it that around 1975-1976 two young hackers were working on a missile guidance computer when they decided that they could also use the machine to make music ... well, they left their missile-guiding and had their first Fairlight on the market by 1979.

The design philosophy of this machine is such that it is constantly software and hardware updatable and to this end they have a huge staff working on software (which is remarkably bug free) and have updated hardware periodically.

These machines are the most advanced and thus the most expensive but since most will be MIDI compatible it will be possible to write a program for a piece of music on your micro — and then be able to interface your micro with these 'super' synths in a recording studio. These are the instruments that are now being used extensively to create the new, clean, heavily produced music that is in the pop charts. When used with the latest digital desks and tape recorders truly amazing sounds can be created. It is worth noting that very few records have real drummers anymore and that lots of really 'natural' horns, strings and even human voices are being produced by these new digital machines.

Another category of sound creation that is now available is called FM Synthesis. This system is being developed by Yamaha for their new range of synths, and while being more complex to use (because the parameters of sound creation are larger) produce very 'clean' sounds that are often very 'natural' sounding. They use ROM plug-in cartridges for sound storage. These new Yamaha synths are MIDI compatible but beware! Many players used to the advantages of instant sound modification of analogue synths find sound creation on these new synths a bit laborious; so try before you buy. As well as these keyboard synths Yamaha are bringing out a micro specific-

Continued on page 81

ABOVE: The  
Yamaha DX  
Series  
Programmable  
Rhythm Synth.

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# The future's all in the cards.

You're looking at the PC 100. The last word in portable keyboards from Yamaha.

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the Yamaha PC 100 for yourself. If you've never thought you could play, you've never thought of the playcard.

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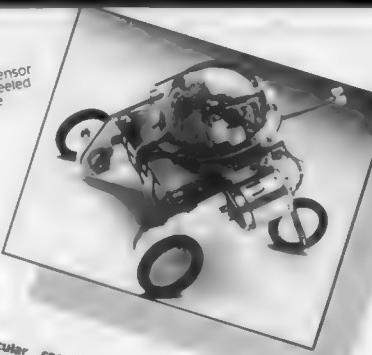
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 **YAMAHA**



**Line Tracer II £17.99**  
Draw a line and the infra red sensor picks it up and sends this 3 wheeled twin motorised robot along the course you plot



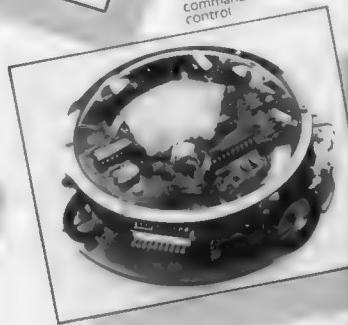
**Piper Mouse £19.99**  
Subsonic sound sensor. The condenser microphone will pick up the sound to send the Piper Mouse scurrying where you go



**Monkey £5.99**  
A command from you into the condenser microphone activates the gripper arms and sends the Monkey climbing along its rope



**Circular £29.99**  
Through its own hand held remote control you issue hand held remote control to issue instructions to the two independently driven wheels - sending the circular wherever you want it to go



**Memocon Crawler £34.99**  
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Prism House, 18-29 Mora St.,

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Telephone: 01-253 2277

# THE DEADLY TUNNELS OF ZARNON



by Micheal Beaton for SPECTRUM

Seven tunnels lie between you and the centre of the planet Zarnon. Few have ventured into this deadly labyrinth before... none have returned. Fire up your CPU and take on the challenge... your Spectrum will love you for it.

**CONTROLS**  
**'Q': MOVE LEFT**  
**'P': MOVE RIGHT**  
**'CAPS SHIFT' WITH THESE KEYS**  
**MAKES YOU MOVE FASTER IN THE**  
**DEEPER LEVELS**  
**SCORE TABLE**

**SCORE TABLE**

- : FUEL DUMP - 20pts  
 : SUPPLY CANISTER - 40pts  
 : POWER POD - 60pts  
 : ENERGISER  
 RESS 'S TO START YOUR FLIGHT INTO THE TUNNELS ...

```

570 PRINT TAB 14.
580 PRINT TAB 14. IL JUH
590 PRINT TAB 14. UI LURH

END BEEP 1.-10 FOR I=1 TO 9 N
EXT. 1.1 BEEP 1.-13 FOR I=1 TO 9 B
END PRINT
RESUT TO GO TO 100. HUMAN. APE
120 PRINT "A PLACE WHERE FEW HA
UE 50H
130 PRINT BEFORE.
140 PRINT AND OF THE FEW WH
150 PRINT NO HAVE GONE.
160 PRINT NONE HAVE RETURNED..
170 BEEP 1.-11 EEEP 1.-6 FOR
180 TTS NEXT. BEEP 1.-10 BE
190 STO PRINT PRESS SPACE TO
200 FPRINT INSTRUCTIONS
210 IF IMPEIS THEN GO TO 5
220 FRIGHT 1 BORDER 0 PAPER 3
IN SIGHT 1
230 FPRINT THE END. TUNNEL
240 FPRINT
250 FPRINT

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30 PRINT THE OBJECT OF THE
31 ME IS TO
32 PRINT STEER OUR SPACE-CAP
33 THROUGH SEVEN TUNNELS TOWARD
34 THE CENTRE OF THE PLANET EARTH
35 PRINT INK 6.   CONTROLS
36 PRINT INK 6.   O N H E L P
37 PRINT INK 6.   F NO E S
38 PRINT INK 6.   DASH-KEYS
39 WITH THESE KEYS HE MAKES HIS
40 FASTER IN THE DEEPEST LEVEL
41 PRINT INK 6.   SCORE TABLE

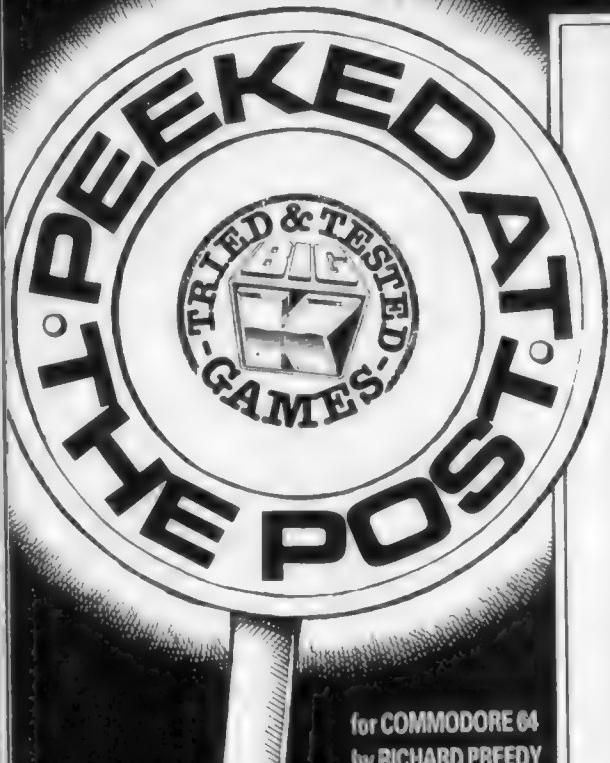
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      N    H    T    R    L    E    T    H    S    G    M    P
ATA   1    122  224  192  240  25
ATA   2    7    15  15  127  325  7
ATA   3    4    124  221  201  60  1
ATA   4    5    219  145  102  102  60
ATA   5    0.60  102  24  24  102
ATA   6    0.60  102. 165  155  1
ATA   7    36.24  36  24  50  60
ATA   8    24.60  24  126  24.25
TQ   2.00  100  100
P1=0 TD=7 INPUT 3 PRIN

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SC. 8 FUEL  LVL 1



**for COMMODORE 64**  
**by RICHARD PREEDY**

**And at the last fence it's 2-Player Game from Choose a Horse out of a List of 5. Place a Bet is coming up strongly on the outside of Up To £1000 Per Game. Also making a good showing is After Players' Selection only a nose in front of Race Starts. Random Movement fell at the start of this seven-jump course.**

```

1 PRINT"J" P=1000 D=1000
5 FOR E 53281.0 TO E 53280.8
10 GOTO 160
11 B=1364 H=1264 C=1344
12 D=1364 E=1424
13 PRINT"J" THE NATIONAL BY F.I.
14 PRINT"J"
15 PRINT"J" UNDER STARTERS
16 PRINT"J"
17 PRINT"J"
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140 PRINT"J" G B

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150 PRINT "H" : GOTO 150
160 PRINT "H" : GOTO 160
170 PRINT "I" : GOTO 170
180 PRINT "S" : GOTO 180
190 PRINT "H" : GOTO 190
200 PRINT "|||||" : GOTO 200
202 FOR L=1 TO 1000:NEXT
:PRINT"RUNNER AND THEY'RE OFF"
103 FOR L=1 TO 1000:NEXT
:PRINT"RUNNER"
205 POKE A,222:POKE B,222:POKE C,222
:POKE D,222:POKE E,222
210 IF INT(RND(1)*6)=0 THEN A=A+1
:POKE A-1,160:IF PEEK(A)=230 THEN
A=A+1:GOTO 250
211 IF INT(RND(1)*6)=1 THEN B=B+1
:POKE B-1,160:IF PEEK(B)=230 THEN
B=B+1:GOTO 260
212 IF INT(RND(1)*6)=2 THEN C=C+1
:POKE C-1,160:IF PEEK(C)=230 THEN
C=C+1:GOTO 270
213 IF INT(RND(1)*6)=3 THEN D=D+1
:POKE D-1,160:IF PEEK(D)=230 THEN
D=D+1:GOTO 280
214 IF INT(RND(1)*6)=4 THEN E=E+1
:POKE E-1,160:IF PEEK(E)=230 THEN
E=E+1:GOTO 290
215 IF PEEK(A)=220 THEN A=1664
:POKE A,222
216 IF PEEK(B)=220 THEN B=1704
:POKE B,222

```

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217 IF PEEK(C)=220 THEN C=1744
:POKE C,222
218 IF PEEK(D)=220 THEN D=1784
:POKE D,222
219 IF PEEK(E)=220 THEN E=1824
:POKE E,222
220 IF PEEK(R)=134 THEN 310
220 IF PEEK(B)=137 THEN 320
231 IF PEEK(C)=142 THEN 330
232 IF PEEK(D)=137 THEN 340
233 IF PEEK(E)=147 THEN 350
240 GOTO 205
250 POKE A-2,160:PRINT"RUNNER"
:IS OVER THE HURDLE
:GOTO 300
260 POKE B-2,160:PRINT"RUNNER"
:IS OVER THE HURDLE
:GOTO 300
270 POKE C-2,160:PRINT"RUNNER"
:IS OVER THE HURDLE
:GOTO 300
280 POKE D-2,160:PRINT"RUNNER"
:IS OVER THE HURDLE
:GOTO 300
290 POKE E-2,160:PRINT"RUNNER"
:IS OVER THE HURDLE
:GOTO 300
300 FOR L=1 TO 1000:NEXT
:PRINT"RUNNER"
310 PRINT"RUNNER"
:;GOTO 315
AND 'A' IS THE
WINNER
320 PRINT"RUNNER"
:;GOTO 1000
AND 'B' IS THE
WINNER
330 PRINT"RUNNER"
:;GOTO 1100
AND 'C' IS THE
WINNER
340 PRINT"RUNNER"
:;GOTO 1200
AND 'D' IS THE
WINNER
:;GOTO 1300

```



350 PRINT "ADVICE  
WINNER  
.FREEDY  
370 PRINT"

HND KEY IS THE  
"GOTO 1400  
THE NATIONAL BY R.I

380 PRINT " THIS GAME IS FOR TW  
D PEOPLE!  
410 PRINT "ENTER THE PLAYERS NAMES  
415 PRINT "PLAYER.1.": INPUT A\$  
420 PRINT "PLAYER.2.": INPUT B\$: GOTO 700  
560 PRINT "ON HORSE": INPUT F\$  
570 PRINT "AMOUNT": INPUT F  
580 IF F>1000 THEN 610  
590 GOTO 7  
700 PRINT "A\$" PLACE YOUR BET NOT MORE  
E THAN >"0"  
710 PRINT "THE HORSES FROM THE TOP ARE  
-A  
720 PRINT "  
730 PRINT "  
740 PRINT "  
750 PRINT "  
760 PRINT "ON HORSE": INPUT F\$  
770 PRINT "AMOUNT": INPUT F  
780 IF F>1000 THEN 770  
790 PRINT "B\$" PLACE YOUR BET NOT MORE  
E THAN >"1000"  
800 PRINT "THE HORSES FROM THE TOP ARE  
-A  
810 PRINT "  
820 PRINT "  
830 PRINT "  
840 PRINT "  
850 PRINT "ON HORSE": INPUT C\$  
860 PRINT "AMOUNT": INPUT G  
870 IF G>1000 THEN 860  
880 GOTO 7  
1000 FOR L=1 TO 3000 NEXT  
PRINT "THE NATIONAL BY R.I  
.FREEDY  
1010 PRINT"  
  
1020 IF F\$="A"THEN PRINT "A\$ WINS >F  
1030 IF F\$<>"A"THEN PRINT "A\$ LOSES >  
F"  
1040 IF G\$="B"THEN PRINT "B\$ WINS >F  
1050 IF G\$<>"B"THEN PRINT "B\$ LOSES  
>F": GOTO 1460  
1100 FOR L=1 TO 3000 NEXT  
PRINT "THE NATIONAL BY R.I  
.FREEDY  
1110 PRINT"  
  
1120 IF F\$="B"THEN PRINT "A\$ WINS >F  
1130 IF F\$<>"B"THEN PRINT "A\$ LOSES >  
F"  
1140 IF G\$="B"THEN PRINT "B\$ WINS >F  
1150 IF G\$<>"B"THEN PRINT "B\$ LOSES >  
F": GOTO 1460  
1200 FOR L=1 TO 3000 NEXT  
PRINT "THE NATIONAL BY R.I  
.FREEDY



#### 1210 PRINT

1220 IF F\$="C"THEN PRINT "C WINS >F  
1230 IF F\$<>"C"THEN PRINT "C LOSES >  
F"  
1240 IF G\$="C"THEN PRINT "C WINS >F  
1250 IF G\$<>"C"THEN PRINT "C LOSES >  
F": GOTO 1460  
1300 FOR L=1 TO 3000 NEXT  
PRINT "THE NATIONAL BY R.I  
.FREEDY  
1310 PRINT"  
  
1320 IF F\$="D"THEN PRINT "THE KING >F  
1330 IF F\$<>"D"THEN PRINT "D WINS >F  
1340 IF G\$="D"THEN PRINT "D WINS >F  
1350 IF G\$<>"D"THEN PRINT "D LOSES >  
F": GOTO 1460  
1400 FOR L=1 TO 3000 NEXT  
PRINT "THE NATIONAL BY R.I  
.FREEDY  
1410 PRINT"  
  
1420 IF F\$="E"THEN PRINT "E WINS >F  
1430 IF F\$<>"E"THEN PRINT "E LOSES >  
F"  
1440 IF G\$="E"THEN PRINT "E WINS >F  
1450 IF G\$<>"E"THEN PRINT "E LOSES >  
F": GOTO 1460  
1460 PRINT "GIGANTIC WINNINHOTHER >F XYZ  
1465 GET A\$: IF A\$="I"THEN 1460  
1470 IF A\$="N"THEN END  
1480 IF A\$="Y"THEN 1460



# ARCADE ALLEY

PAUL RAMBALI dons bone-dome and G-suit for some breathtaking air combat sequences

## FOXBATS WERE NEVER LIKE THIS...

FROM THE moment you drop the coins in the slot and literally feel the jet engines rumble to life, you know you are in for a ride.

MyStar Electronics' *M.A.C.H. 3* is the most sophisticated, the most hopelessly gripping laser game yet — one that uses real-life footage to put you in the cockpit of a modern jet fighter. Ever wanted to fly a crack Israeli Air Force raid across the Golan Heights? Ever wondered what a victory roll feels like at 2,000 feet? All you have to do is scramble and go upstairs in this baby.

The hardware alone is impressive. Designed by Dave Pfeiffer, the wrapover console and the special panoramic screen image interacts with the aural (and — I promise you — physical) sound effects to create a startling and highly effective fantasy. The engines throb beneath you, missiles impact with a distant thud, and as the jet banks and rolls, you find yourself leaning helplessly into the turns.

Select a game option to start: either over-flying — i.e.

looking straight down on what is in fact actual footage of San Diego in California; or flying through — with a view straight ahead as though from a real cockpit — a series of linked scenes probably filmed in the arid, rocky terrain of the American South West.

### THRILLS AND SPILLS LASER-STYLE

In both options, your unmarked Military Air Command Hunter jet is superimposed using computer graphics, but the first — over-flying — definitely lacks the excitement of the latter. It's much slower and, despite targets on the roads, quayside and industrial sites below, your attention is drawn to the mundane business of dodging enemy jets and rockets that scroll across the screen in the all-too-familiar pattern of games like *River Raid*.

Everyone but the *M.A.C.H. 3* neophyte will opt straight away for the second game. Targets appear marked by com-



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patterns  
  
straight  
y com-

puter-generated 'windows' into which you must fire missiles as you hurtle across the landscape, coming in low over rocky outcrops and banking hard into valleys to outflank enemy rockets. A steep climb takes you high into clouds that hide helicopter gunships; diving down again, your target is a hydro-electric dam. A hair-raising turn takes you over some hills and into a heavily-fortified ravine. Here the enemy gunners have heat-seeking rockets on their side, and many lives have been spent mastering the knack of hitting these exasperating projectiles before they intercept. The interminable, perilous (and costly) ravine finally opens out onto flatlands, with no target in sight and time for a well-earned victory roll.

Programmed by Chris Brewer and Fred Darmstadt, *M.A.C.H. 3* is a real roller-coaster—a loud, dizzy, high-speed, vertigo-inducing tumult of sights and sounds. Simply hanging on to the joystick and plummeting through the air is a thrill, never mind scoring any points. The daredevil man-

oeuvres executed in the course of this 3D spectacle are a challenge for the strongest stomachs. So captivating is it that one reviewer even wrote that she heard verbal instructions advising which targets hit (or was I so caught up that I didn't?).

## ALONG COMES EASTWOOD

Like Tarto's *Laser Grand Prix*—a *Pole Position* game superimposed on actual footage of the Mount Fuji race circuit—*M.A.C.H. 3*'s real backgrounds are an eye-popping advance on Don Bluth's cartoon animation for *Dragon's Lair*. By the time you read this it will have been joined by Atari's *Firefox*, incorporating footage from the Clint Eastwood film about stealing a Soviet jet. And it can only be a matter of time before you are sitting alongside *Knight Rider* or even playing tennis with John McEnroe. Imagine the sound effects on that!

# SOFTWARE INVASION...

Let excitement invade your home computer!  
Travel to Alpha Centauri. Enter the Vortex.  
Command the ground missiles, or join the  
shoot-out at the O.K. Corral!

## GUNSMOKE

The movement of the saloon-bar door was all the warning he needed! At the speed of light his hand moved toward his holster while a sixth sense warned him of the upper floor window. 3D ACTION SOUND EFFECTS. BEAUTIFUL GRAPHICS BBC MODEL B £7.95 CASSETTE £11.95 DISK

## 3D BOMB ALLEY

The continued thunder of the hissing ground missiles had long now deafened him - unless he had some of those bombers down, the rest, in the small stretch of water was a sitting duck...  
3D ACTION SOUND EFFECTS. BEAUTIFUL GRAPHICS BBC MODEL B £7.95 CASSETTE £11.95 DISK

## ATTACK ON ALPHA CENTAURI

He punched the key, and the control monitor filled with the picture of bug-eyed wasps attacking from their volcanic nest, decisively he dived to the left and his laser pen burst into action.  
3D ACTION EXPLOSIVE SOUND EFFECTS BBC MODEL B £7.95 CASSETTE £11.95 DISK

- Distributors, Multiple Store and Retailer Group Inquiries invited.
- Available from WH Smith, HMV, all Spectrum shops and over 500 retail outlets in the U.K.

There was no escape. He had to carry the Vortex and bat on his skills! He grabbed the manual controls and with determination fired back at deck pens. EXCELLENT SOUND KEYBOARD OR JOYSTICK. BBC MODEL B £7.95 AVAILABLE ON ACORN ELECTRON CASSETTE FOR £7.95

## VORTEX WING

He glanced at his fuel levels, a few more seconds of flight and he'd have to swing round and land in two minutes. NO TIME TO LOSE. EXCELLENT SOUND KEYBOARD OR JOYSTICK. BBC MODEL B £7.95 CASSETTE £11.95 DISK

## Spooks & Spiders

perhaps, very slowly, he could make his escape. As he lay there, climbing down his tool box, he heard the sound of a car approaching. SOUND EFFECTS. BBC MODEL B £7.95 CASSETTE £11.95 DISK

## HOW TO ORDER

Software Invasion Ltd, 50 Elborough Street, Southfields, London SW18 5DN. Tel: 0181 871 1111. To order direct, send a fax to 0181 871 1111. If you're a distributor, send a fax to 0181 871 1111. OVERSEAS ORDERS: Please add £1.00 per program.

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VORTEX 2					
ACORN ELECTRON					
ATTACK ON ALPHA CENTAURI					
BOMB ALLEY					
COLLECTOR					
EAGLE WING					
SPOOKS & SPIDERS					

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I am a Distributor/Multi Retailer/Dealer. Please contact me (please delete who never not applicable)

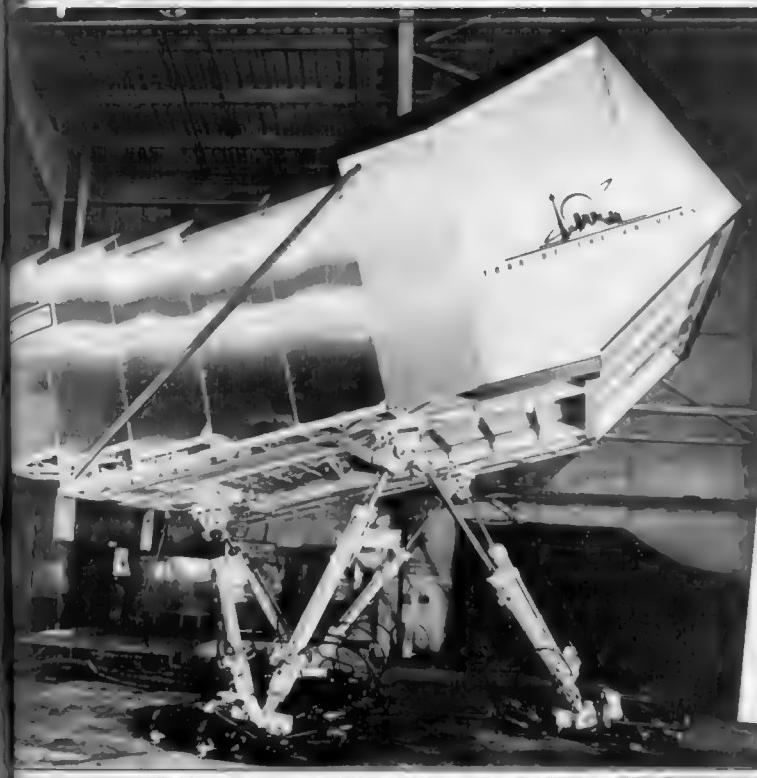
# SOFTWARE INVASION

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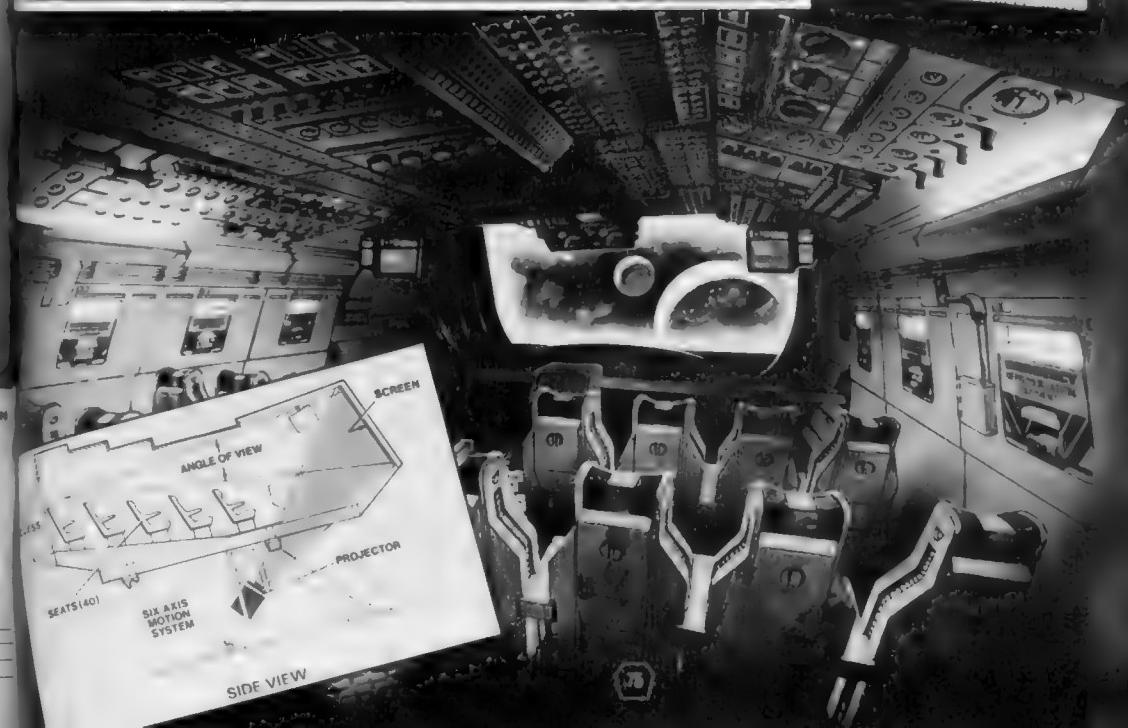


BRIDGE  
ALLEY

# RELAX-IT'S ONLY A VIDEO GAME

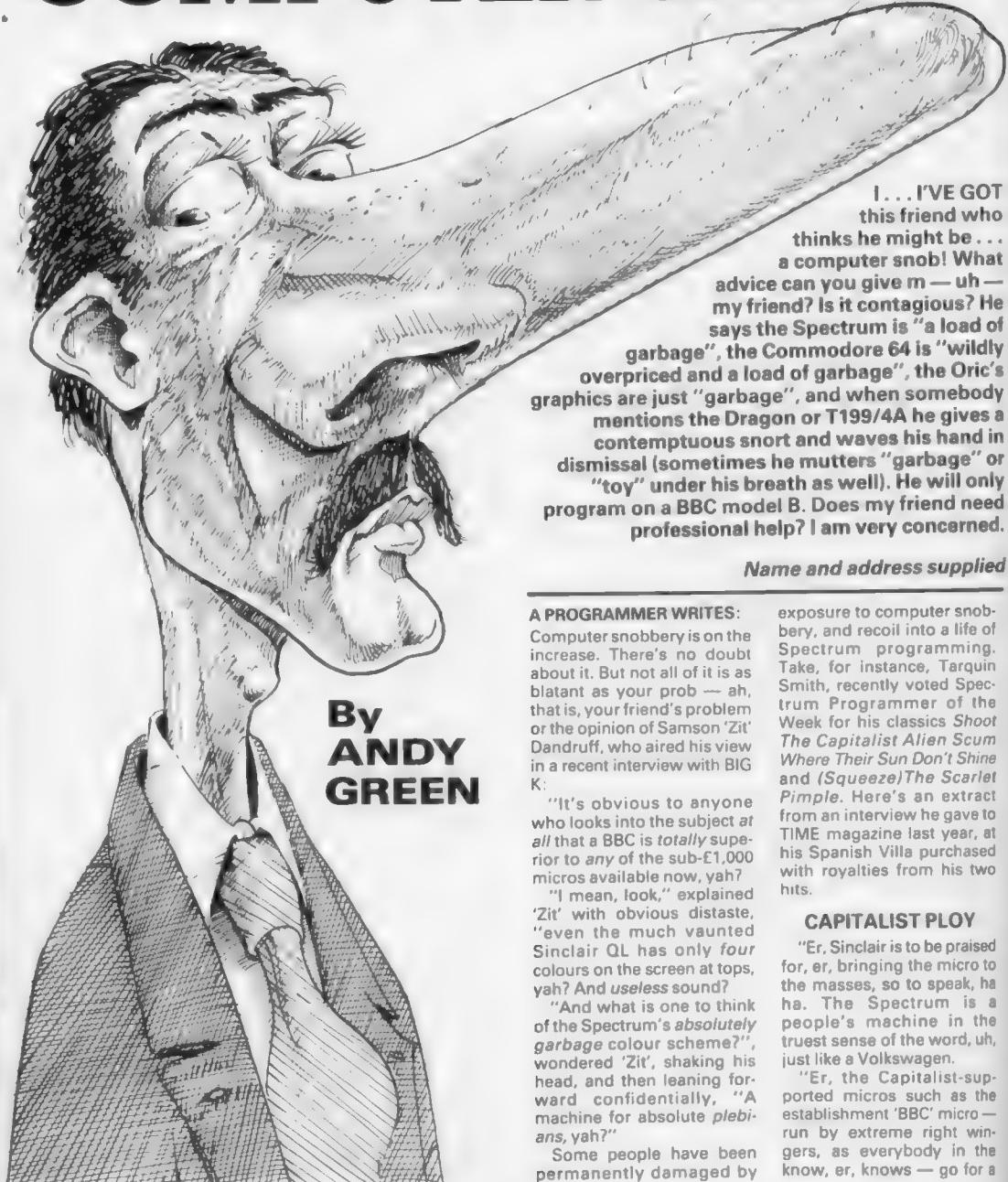


**ROLL OVER NINTENDO!**  
After the success of their 747 Flight Simulator (reviewed in BIG K No. 1), the mighty Rediffusion company have turned their hand to lighter things. By the time you read this, the good citizens of Toronto, Canada, will be forking out their dollars for the privilege of a trip aboard the world's first Space Flight Sim — forty million dollars' worth. Up to 40 punters at a time get a guided tour round the Solar System — using sim techniques familiar from Mariner and Voyager probes. Even the inside of the capsule is equipped à la mode, with warnings about vacuum, etc. Also featured: asteroids, Jupiter orbit, and near brushes with man-made debris. Can't wait.



BIG K GOES ALL ELITIST...

# CONFESIONS OF A COMPUTER SNOB!



By  
**ANDY  
GREEN**

I... I'VE GOT this friend who thinks he might be... a computer snob! What advice can you give me — uh — my friend? Is it contagious? He says the Spectrum is "a load of garbage", the Commodore 64 is "wildly overpriced and a load of garbage", the Oric's graphics are just "garbage", and when somebody mentions the Dragon or T199/4A he gives a contemptuous snort and waves his hand in dismissal (sometimes he mutters "garbage" or "toy" under his breath as well). He will only program on a BBC model B. Does my friend need professional help? I am very concerned.

Name and address supplied

#### A PROGRAMMER WRITES:

Computer snobbery is on the increase. There's no doubt about it. But not all of it is as blatant as your prob — ah, that is, your friend's problem or the opinion of Samson 'Zit' Dandruff, who aired his view in a recent interview with BIG K:

"It's obvious to anyone who looks into the subject at all that a BBC is *totally* superior to any of the sub-£1,000 micros available now, yah?

"I mean, look," explained 'Zit' with obvious distaste, "even the much vaunted Sinclair QL has only four colours on the screen at tops, yah? And *useless* sound?"

"And what is one to think of the Spectrum's *absolutely garbage* colour scheme?", wondered 'Zit', shaking his head, and then leaning forward confidentially, "A machine for absolute *plebians*, yah?"

Some people have been permanently damaged by

exposure to computer snobbery, and recoil into a life of Spectrum programming. Take, for instance, Tarquin Smith, recently voted Spectrum Programmer of the Week for his classics *Shoot The Capitalist Alien Scum Where Their Sun Don't Shine* and *(Squeeze)The Scarlet Pimple*. Here's an extract from an interview he gave to TIME magazine last year, at his Spanish Villa purchased with royalties from his two hits.

#### CAPITALIST PLOY

"Er, Sinclair is to be praised for, er, bringing the micro to the masses, so to speak, ha ha. The Spectrum is a people's machine in the truest sense of the word, uh, just like a Volkswagen."

"Er, the Capitalist-supported micros such as the establishment 'BBC' micro—run by extreme right wingers, as everybody in the know, er, knows — go for a

large profit margin to swindle the working class and the unemployed from their hard earned wages!" Tarquin told us, sipping from his dry Martini and taking a drag from his cigar. "Or, er, supplementary benefit," he added thoughtfully.

Some of the worst afflicted computer snobs attain the height of their sadistic pleasures by becoming software reviewers for magazines. When they grind a program into the dust and spit on its limp remains, some try to justify their actions by claiming they are weeding out the good programs from the chaff.

Tom 'No K's' Hoffmann, variously described by experts in the field as a 'big-headed twit', a 'jerk' and 'a snob' defends his reviews.

"Computers," he begins in his monotone voice, fingering his ear-lobe and looking away to one side, "are capable of much better."

"The main reason why games aren't very good at the moment is that one programmer can only do so much. Programs written by teams are going to be much, much better. Take *The Hobbit*, for example."

"Really, although it was good at the time, *The Hobbit* is a very simple adventure. Without graphics, as in the BBC version, it really isn't worth playing," he added.

"I don't know about you,

but arcade games simply bore me to tears," he yawned. "They're all the same. Once you've played *Space Invaders*, you've played them all."

However, some small retailers and software houses have been claiming that large software houses with massive monetary backing will be the death of them. Jack Fudge — who runs Cheap-Jack software from the back-room of a run-down fish and chip shop in Romford — agrees.

#### CORPORATE GREED

"Imagine," says Fudge. "An' Bug-Byte. And blooming 'Software Projects' ... Pah! Sgettin like an honest bloke can't earn a decent livin'. Bloomin' Fassichts, thass what they is," he added, pausing to pick out a chip from his desk and chew it gloomily.

"Isst fancy packagin' wot does it, yer mark me words, boy. Wiv us the customer knows what e's getting, know what I mean? None of that fancy gold stuff — we wrap the cassettes in chip bags so as yer can see jus' whass yer's gettin' ... clean ones, mind you," he confided, pointing to a torn cardboard box over in a corner spilling greaseproof chip bags onto the floor.

Mr Fudge, whose company's bread and butter is the games tape *'One Thousand*

*Super Awesome One Line Games For The Jupiter Ace*', claims that big companies are 'conspiring' to push the smaller companies out of the marketplace. He cites the instance that his tape for the Jupiter Ace was selling "tens of units" a week until about six months ago, when for some reason he suddenly wasn't able to sell any at all.

"S pretty obvious to me, yer know what I mean, that this was not unconnected, yer know what I mean, with Virgin Games bringing out a new batch of programs, are yer with me?" Fudge told BIG K darkly.

But what can be done to help the certified snob? We asked Dr X.S. Verbiage, a top specialist in the field, for some handy tips:

\*\*Don't let him read an American magazine called BYTE — if necessary feed him BIG K intravenously.

\*\*Make him use a Spectrum at least once a month at first, then with increasing frequency. If the case is very bad, start him off with just touching a Spectrum keyboard for five seconds at a time.

\*\*Burn any books by Lance Leventhal or Rodney Zaks.

\*\*Make him use tape recorders again instead of his new disc drive. Nothing humbles a hacker so.

\*\*If none of the above works, shoot him. Or yourself.



## TAKE A 'BYTE' OUT OF BIG K!

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- \* Write a program?
- \* Produce some spiffy computer graphics?

\* Share some games-playing hints and tips with your fellow hackers?

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EXACTLY WHAT  
SYSTEM HAVE YOU  
GOT?



TONY BENYON

We're waiting...

for VIC-20 by KEVIN HUGHES

Hop the rabbit along the girders. When over a lift hit the fire button on your joystick. Keep going till you get the carrot at the top — watch out for falling barrels. Eight levels to conquer.

# Hare Lifts

0 POKE51,192:POKE2,21:POKE55,192:POKE1,127

1 D1=349999

2 DIMP1,21

3 POKE368781,2

4 NH=150

5 C1=1 C2=1

7 NH=230 NJ=230

8 LE=0 B=1

9 RESTORE

10 POKE36879,8:POKE55,1,127

11 POKE36869,240:POKE55,1,128

12 POKE37154,127

20 PRINT"J\CHR\$(14)

30 PRINT" HARE LIFTS" IY "KEVIN HUGHES"

40 PRINT" J\CHR\$(14) PRESS BUTTON"

50 PRINT" J\CHR\$(14)

60 IFPEEK(37137)>94THEN160

65 PRINT"J"

70 FORT=0TO100

80 READA:IFA=-1THEN110

85 POKE7168+T,A

90 NEXTT

110 DATA0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0

120 DATA0,165,24,24,80,24,24,24,80

130 DATA0,86,153,153,153,153,86,80

140 DATA255,0,16,56,84,16,0,255

150 DATA255,24,36,36,86,86,129,255

160 DATA36,52,24,126,126,80,24,24,-1

200 PFINT"J\CHR\$(14)HARE LIFTS" IY "KEVIN HUGHES"

205 FORT=0TO200

210 PRINT" J\CHR\$(14)HARE LIFTS" IY "KEVIN HUGHES"

215 POKE7781+(T\*22),0

220 NEXTT

235 POKE36867,42

240 POKE36869,255

250 TI\$="000000"

255 FFINT"6"

260 FORT=1TO5

260 PRINT" J\CHR\$(14)HARE LIFTS" IY "KEVIN HUGHES"

270 S=INT(RND(0)\*16)+2

280 PRINT"J\TAB(S)"W"

290 NEXTT

311 PRINT" HARE LIFTS"

310 P=8038

310 LE=LE+1:IFLE=1THENTT=250

320 IFLE=2THENTT=150

330 IFLE=3THENTT=100

340 IFLE=4THENTT=2 TT=150

350 IFLE=5THENTT=10 TT=10

355 IFLE=6THENTT=2 TT=70

360 IFLE=7THENTT=0 B=1 C1=0 TT=70

365 IFLE=8THENB=1,B=2 C2=0 TT=70

370 IFLE=9THENB=0

375 IFLE=10 THENB=0

380 IFLE=11 THENB=0

385 IFLE=12 THENB=0

390 IFLE=13 THENB=0

395 IFLE=14 THENB=0

400 IFLE=15 THENB=0

405 PRINT"J\CHR\$(14)LEVEL"LE" TIME "TI\$

406 PRINT" J\CHR\$(14)HARE LIFTS" IY "KEVIN HUGHES"

410 BPC1,1=BP1,1+C1 P1=P1+1

410 IFPEEK(BP(1)+22)>3THEN2000

410 IFP1>19THENP1=1:BP1)=BP1)-19

410 BP(2)=BP(2)-1:P2=P2-1

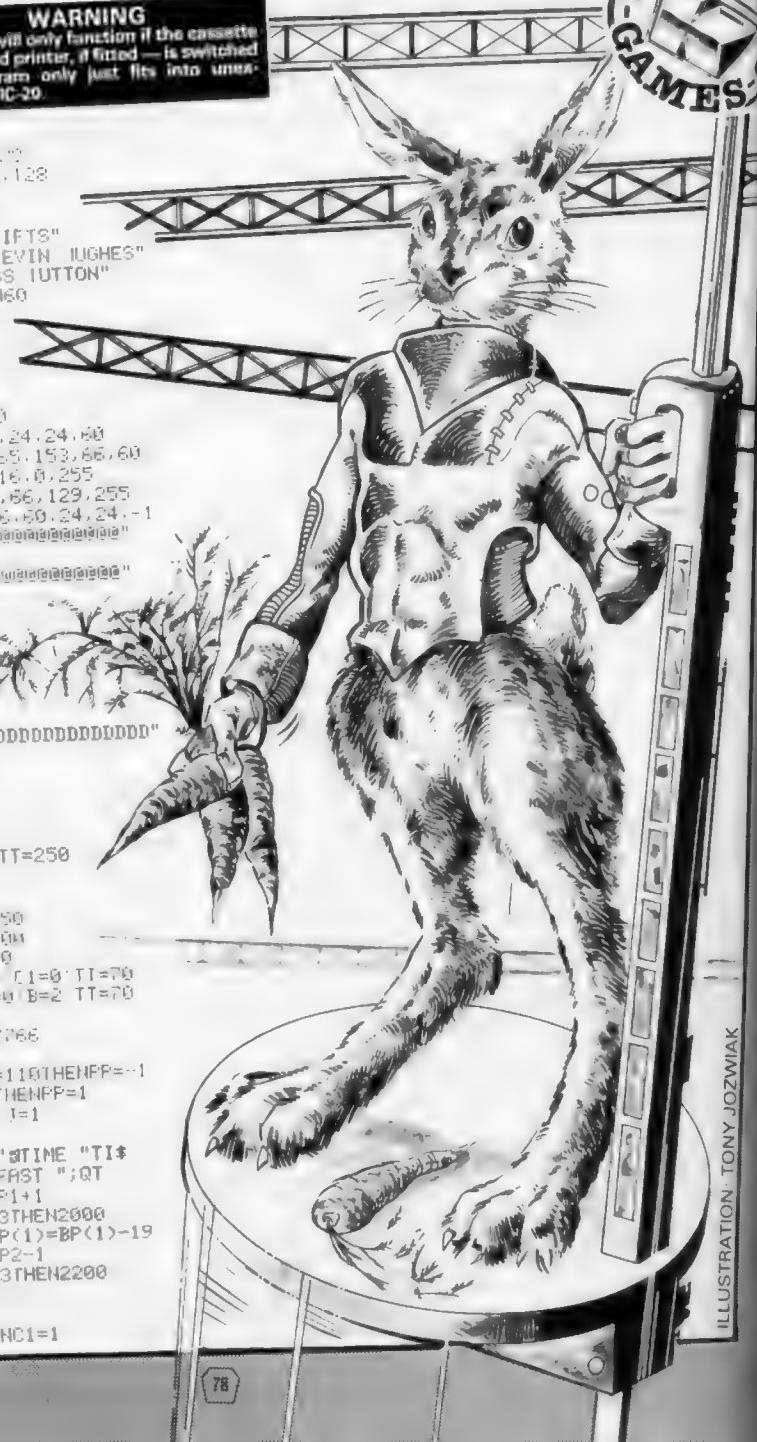
450 IFPEEK(BP(2)+22)>3THEN2200

475 D\$=MID\$(TI\$,5,2)

475 V=VAL(D\$)

475 IFV/3=INT(V/3)THENC1=1

**WARNING**  
Joystick will only function if the cassette unit — and printer, if fitted — is switched off. Program only just fits into unexpanded VIC-20.



continued on page 83

ILLUSTRATION: TONY JOZWIAK

# System 3 Software...Graphically Amazing!

## DEATHSTAR INTERCEPTOR

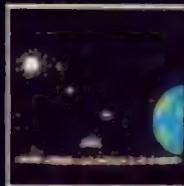
LAUNCH



(Screen 1)

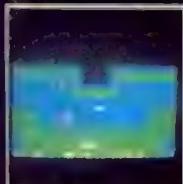


APPROACH



(Screen 2)

ENTRY



(Screen 3)

LAZER CYCLE



Earth is threatened by an Empire Deathstar, can you penetrate its defences and destroy it before it destroys you? 52K of pure machine code to give you 12 screens of 3D graphics, super smooth 3D animation, unbelievable sound effects music, 4 skill levels and hi-score table... this is the ultimate challenge?

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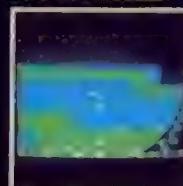
Available now at £9.99!

DURANIUM BARRIERS



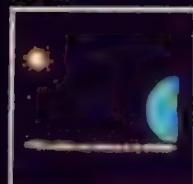
(Screen 4)

INTERCEPT MISSILES



(Screen 5)

VICTORY



(Screen 12)

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(No Req.)

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CBM64 Spectra video).

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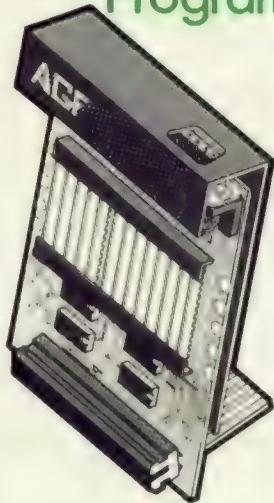
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## Quickshot

## Quickshot II



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<input type="checkbox"/>	ZXSPECTRUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			Please tick
			FINAL TOTAL

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## HARE LIFTS continued

```

450 IFV>3-INTV>20 THENCL=1
460 IFP2=1 THENHC=8 BP2=1 IF+2 EP19
480 FUE EBP(1)=1 EP19,NH=0,01 POKEBP(1)=2
481 POKEE,BP=1 THEN502
500 POKEBP(2)+30720,C2:POKEBP(2)=2
501 POKE 30974,111
502 IFPEEK(P+PP+22)=3THEN520
503 IFLE=8THENC2=0
504 IFLE=8THENC1=0
505 IFLE=7THENC2=0
506 IFLE=8THENC2=U
507 IFLE=8THENC1=0
510 IFLE=7THENC1=0
511 IFJ=1THEN520
512 IFPEEK(P+PP+22)<4THENHP=0
520 IFPEEK(P)=2THEN5000
521 P=P+PP:PP=0
530 IFPEEK(P)=2THEN5000
540 IFPEEK(P)=5THENH6021
550 POKEP+30720,3:POKEP+1
560 FORT=0TOTT NEXTT
570 POKEP,0:IFT=1THENP=P+22
580 J=0
590 POKEBP(1),0
600 POKEBP(2),0
610 GOTO370
1000 IFPEEK(P+22)>3THEN6010410
1001 IFP<7768THEN6010410
1005 CL=PEEK(P-66)30720+
1006 CC=PEEK(P-66)30720+
1010 FORU=1TO4
1011 NN>NN+5:POKE 36875,NH
1020 P=P-22:POKEP+30720,3
1030 POKEP,1
1040 POKEP+22+30720,5:POKEP+22,3
1041 FORT=1TO50 NEXTT
1042 POKEP+22,0
1050 NEXTU
1060 POKEP+22+30720,CC:POKEP+22,CL
1070 POKE+28,4
1080 GOTO410
2000 BP(1)=BP(1)+18
2001 NH=NH-10
2010 IFBP(1)>8120 THENBP(1)=7747:FI=1:III=1:II=0
2020 GOTO430
2030 BP(2)=BP(2)+1
2040 NJ=NJ-10
2050 IFBP(2)>8120 THENBP(2)=7746:FI=2:III=1:II=0
2060 IFBP(2)>8120 ANDB=3THENBP(2)=P+1:FI=2:III=1:II=0
2070 GOTO480
5000 PRINT"J":POKE36869,240
5010 PRINT"YOU SURVIVED FOR"
5020 PRINT"ATTEMPTS"
5031 IFLE>1THENPRINT" "
5042 PRINT
5043 PRINT"PRESS FIRE BUTTON"
5044 POKE36876,0:POKE36875,0
5045 POKE36874,140
5046 POPEI=1TO999
5047 LETFI=1NEXTI
5048 POKE36874,0
5049 IFPEEK(37150)<7744THENL=100
5050 GOTO303
5051 NH=150 NH=200 NJ=200
5052 POKEBP(2),0
5053 POKEBP(1),0
5054 GOTO255
5060 PRINT"THISHELD IT!!"
5070 T=VAL(T$)
5080 IFT<OTHENPRINT"NEW RECORD!!!"NEXTT
5085 POKE36875,0
5095 POKE36876,0
5105 POKE36874,0
5110 GOTO5050
20000 PRINT"FEEM(37150): NH=200000

```

READY.



ILLUSTRATION: TONY JOSWIAK

*The thing you've always wanted to do  
but never thought possible ...*

# CHANGING CHARACTER

**NIGEL FARRIER** continues  
his how-to series on  
Atari graphics . . .

THIS MONTH I intend to give you a brief overview of how to redefine the character set on the Atari 400 and 800. My eventual aim, after covering Antic Mode 4 next month, will be to use this to write a short game for you. As I have not written it yet myself your guess will be as good as mine as to how it will turn out!

### In-built characters

The Atari holds its own 256 characters in ROM or Read Only Memory. It actually only holds half of them but who is counting? Because the characters are situated in ROM we hit our very first snag (and you thought that this was going to be easy!). You cannot write to ROM to change them. Fortunately Atari did give us location 756. If you PEEK (756) you will get back the number 224. What this number actually refers to is 'page 256' in the computer's memory. As a page is 256 bytes long, page 224 is pointing to 224\*256 which (for those of you without a calculator) is 57344. Lo and behold this just happens

to be the first memory address of the ROM and it is the beginning of the data for the in-built character set.

This is therefore going to make our job simpler (see—you were right, this is going to be easy after all). All we have to do is to POKE memory location 756 with another number and the computer will then believe that the character set is somewhere else and start using that one. You've probably guessed by now that we will point it to our own redesigned set.

Yet another point to remember here. Every time you execute a GRAPHICS statement, location 756 is reset to 224. You must therefore remember to POKE this location with the page number of where your character set resides. If not your display will not be quite what you expected.

### Relocating the character set

All we have to do now is to decide where to put said character set. The normal place for this is at the top of RAM, otherwise

known as MEMTOP. The location of MEMTOP is held in location 106. PEEKing (106) will give you different results depending upon whether your machine is a 16K, 32K or 48K model. In order to stop our character set being written over by things such as a display list, we have to fool the Atari into thinking that it has less memory by POKEing location 106 with a number less than is already stored there.

As I will show you in a moment, we have to reserve 4 pages (i.e. 1024 bytes) at the top of memory for our character set. So naturally you would expect to enter the command POKE 106, (PEEK(106)-4).

Wouldn't you? No —

unfortunately certain functions will overrun MEMTOP so we will have to lower the location by even more. Normally I take 8 off of it just to be on the safe side.

### How the character set is stored

Each character is stored as a series of 8 bytes. If we look at the character 'A' it is stored as 0,24,60,102,102,126,102,0. Figure 1 shows how this makes up the letter.

The character is on a grid of 8 by 8. Each of the eight rows is used to calculate a number from 0 to 255 depending upon which square is filling in (i.e. shows on the screen) or not (i.e. background). Therefore, the second row we would have the binary number 00111100 (or 60 in decimal), and the sixth row it would be 01100110 (or 102 in decimal). One thing of note here. All characters have pairs of adjacent blocks filled in. You will not find a character with only one block on its own as this would give an artefact effect on the screen. We will be using that with great effect in our game (I hope).

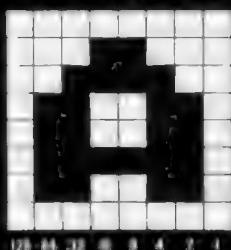


FIGURE 1

There is only one more major stumbling block to overcome. That is that although the letter 'A' has an ATASCII code of 65, it is in fact the 33rd character stored in memory! Weird. But at least there is some sort of logic to it. Figure 2 shows that the first 32 graphics characters have been swapped so that they now run from

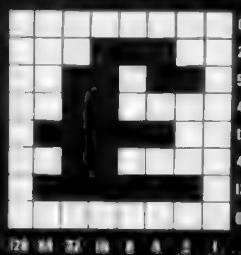


FIGURE 2

the 64th character in memory.

As you can see, if you intend only redefining the lowercase letters there is no problem as they are still in their correct place.

As each character is eight bytes of data long; to obtain the start of any lowercase letter we have to multiply its position by 8 before adding the result to PEEK(756)\*256 — the location for the start of the character set.

Having waffled on for long enough let us get down to some programming.

### Your new character set

You now have a choice to make. If you are going to change only some of the characters then it pays you to copy — from ROM in your reserved place in RAM — the whole of Atari's set and then to change the ones you want. If you are not going to use any of them then this step will be pointless. We, however, will be using a large part of the original so our first step is to transfer it over. Our

```
program will therefore
start:
10 MEMTOP=PEEK
(106): POKE 106,
MEMTOP-8:
GRAPHICS 0
20
RDCHSET=(MEMTOP-
4)*256: FOR X=1 TO 1
023: POKE
RDCHSET+X, PEEK
(57344-X): NEXT X
30 POKE 756,
RDCHSET/256
```

Line 10 reserves our area of memory for us and gets rid of what was there by executing a GRAPHICS 0 statement. Line 20 is a FOR NEXT loop that looks at the values in ROM and POKEs these into our reserved area. Line 30 then tells the computer where our new character set resides. This whole process takes about 10 to 15 seconds and can be speeded up by using a machine code program. Space, unfortunately, does not permit that this time.

Now... all we have to do is to change the ones we want and we are in business. Just as an example for now I will show you how to change one of the characters. I am going to change the 'hash' symbol (the one above the 3) into a true British pound sign.

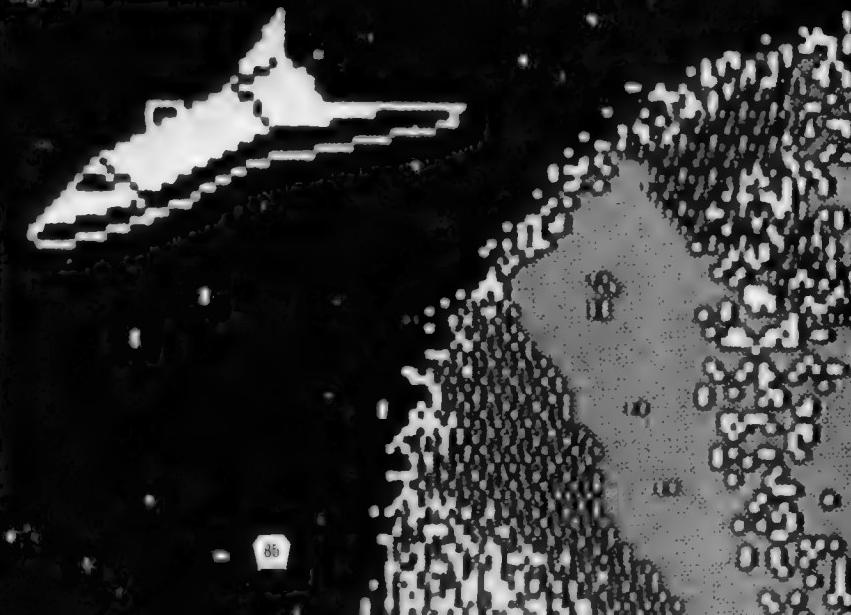


FIGURE 3

First you have to map out on paper/graph paper is easiest) how it will appear. Then calculate the eight numbers you will have to POKE into memory. In Figure 3 I have designed a pound sign and done just that.

The hash symbol is the 35th character so, according to Figure 2, it will be the 3rd character in memory. We therefore need to POKE RDCHSET+(3\*8) with the first number and so on. Our next few lines therefore look like:

```
40 FOR X=0 TO
7: READ A: POKE
RDCHSET+(3*8)+X,A:NEXT X
50 DATA
0,28,54,48,124,48,126,0
If you now RUN this
program, every time you
type SHIFT and 3 you will
get a pound sign — until,
that is, you type in
GRAPHICS 0 without
POKEing 756 with
RDCHSET/256!
```

Now I have got you all totally confused I will try and make it worse next month!

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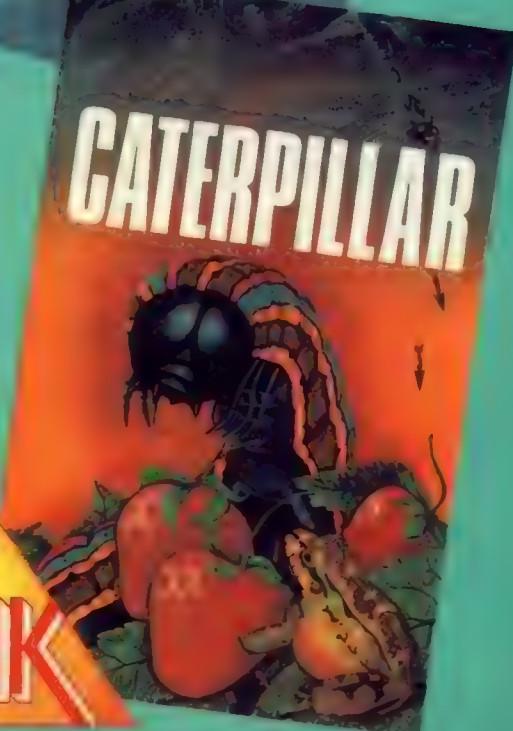
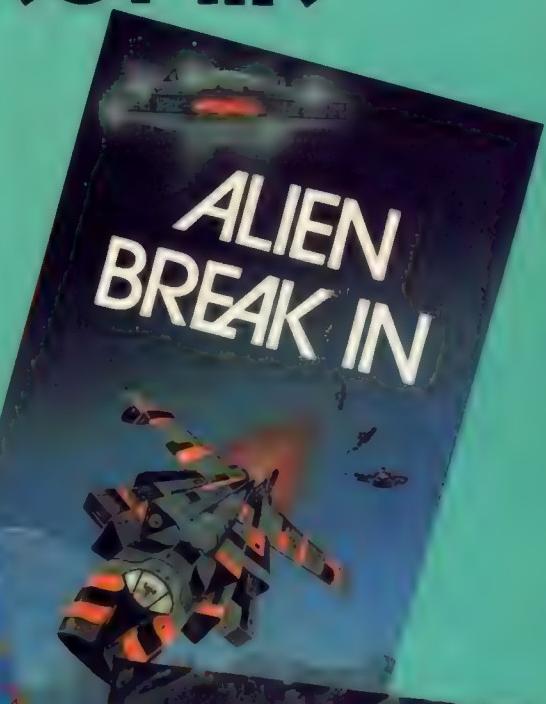
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## Cunning Blag

Your free gift in issue 1 was a brill C15 cassette that worked very well. I was very disappointed to be unable to find anything as good in the shops. Could you please, please send me some Big K computer tapes, or tell me where I can buy one.

P.S. I have your mag.  
J. Clarke,  
Newcastle upon Tyne

We had a lot of compliments on our BIG K cassette, which we here prefer to call a Data Slug. The hi-quality clear plastic... the little brass screws... the whole thing just oozed quality. And as it happens (pause to cough and shoot cuffs), due to the fact that we had to order them in the megaquantities, there ARE one or two left over. Stand by for an upcoming special offer.

## Letters to BIG K

### They Can Read Us ANYTIME ...

IT WAS nice to read a computer magazine with a news section that didn't neglect to all and sundry, but didn't automatically slag everyone off, either — and included the very interesting and perhaps potentially controversial Budapest Beefs story.

Also welcome was the inclusion of articles about computer PEOPLE rather than just computers, as well as equally rare topics like real flight simulators and computer crime — smart. Don't ease up in the features department (Paul Walton certainly gets around).

The software reviews were superb, I think probably the best I've seen — an opinion formed after reading every magazine around. Don't just review games, though. A word processor and a data base reviewed in each issue could be useful. I was also pleased to see that reviews weren't completely dominated by Spectrum programs: too many people forget that there's life after ZX. Especially good (to me) was the sprinkling of Dragon reviews. It's a machine a lot of magazines tend to overlook, especially in the software area, and they seem to forget they could be losing about 150,000 potential readers.

The personality reviewer is a neat touch but Charts don't really serve much purpose — by the time a game reaches the top, it's hardly necessary to trumpet it much more. Another major weakness is that Charts have an automatic bias towards machines which have sold most.

In the hardware department I really enjoyed *Squaring Up*. I mean, what's wrong with a bit of good-natured aggro?

I keyed in *Demon Driver*. It was no worse than any I've entered from any other magazine and better than many, but really, no-one's really likely to play these pseudo-arcade games. Small utilities would be vastly preferable as well as leaving extra space for another Fabulous Feature or two, perhaps even an additional Ratty Regular or some more Heavenly Hardware.

The magazine's title is, well, horrible. It's a shame to spoil Classy Contents with a Naff Name.

Last of all, a couple of personal questions:

1. Is Eddie Babbage any relation?
2. Richard Burton can't be, surely?

Keep up the good work. This is at least one copy you'll sell next month. In fact, I reckon you could find yourselves with a Big Klassic.

Cameron M. Black, Glasgow.

Many thanks for your letter, Cameron. A Marvellous Missive. A Splendid Screech. Post to Boast About — as we have here by printing (nearly) all of it. Regarding reviews, we will continue to try and review stuff for as many machines as possible. On this subject of listings in BASIC — what do other readers feel? All magazines do it, and none of them feel they can stop doing it. What's the solution? Carry on as before, or do as Cameron suggests and start incorporating more utilities? We propose, in upcoming issues, to sway not a little in the direction of the latter ...

To answer your personnel questions ...

1. Yes, Eddie Babbage IS related to the legendary Charles Babbage, inventor of the 'analytical engine'. Ed is in fact Chas's great-great-grandson. Do we gain extra credibility and should we pay Eddie more as a result?

2. Richard Burton is NOT related to the legendary Welsh-born Ham — sorry, Distinguished Thespian. He doesn't even look like him. He doesn't talk like him. But he sure can play Atic Atac (or any other hotso game) better than him.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**  
Your new magazine Big K is absolutely excellent. Well done! It's good to see a magazine that not only lists computer programs but tells you which games are the best buy. I placed my order for No. 2 as soon as I had put down No. 1!

Warren Crawford,  
Braunton, Devon.

Shucks, Warren ... what quick reflexes!

I THINK your new magazine is fabulous. Your reviews are excellent. Big K is also one of the most colourful magazines I've ever seen. Your magazine brings a new dimension to computers.

V. Shanner,  
Seaford, Essex.

That's nothing. You should see what the Editor can do with used chewing gum.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**  
On what? For having the best computer mag out! Yes, I think Big K is the best in the known universe. All the reviews, news, features simply are great. And you don't put too many ads in, like so many other mags. Can I let you into a secret? I'm saying all these good things so that this gets printed. Oops! Sorry!

Bernard McKeown,  
Barnbridge, Co Down.  
Thanks, Bern. Your cheque is in the post.

## Edited by NICKY XIKLUNA

**Enterprising Reader**

I HAVE heard rumours that the Enterprise will be able to accept and run both Spectrum and Commodore 64 programs. Please could you clarify these rumours, one way or the other?  
John Priest, Wolverhampton.

The good news: Enterprise will be launching two converters this September along with their computer. These will convert Sinclair and BBC Basic into Enterprise Basic.

The bad news is that games written in machine code are unintelligible to the converters. There are no prices available for Enterprise peripherals as yet, and even The Shadow has been unable to detect the slightest sassation of a whisper that says there may be plans for a Commodore converter. We'll keep you informed.

**Electron Lust**

Beautiful magazine — I'm impressed! I am soon to own an Acorn Electron and would like to know if you are going to list programs for it.

David Wayne, Leeds.

Most BBC programs (other than those in Mode 7) will run in the Electron while others need a few conversions to do so. However, you'll be transported with joy — at least as far as Mars — by the knowledge that the Electron has fans here at Big K. We'll carry an/soon be feeding its fat keyboard face with some delectable listings.

**Putting The 'A' Team On HOLD**

I AM an LSI component specialist for a multinational electronics company and one of my hobbies is using my BBC 'B' computer. I was therefore interested in your Eeprom Programmer article ('BUILD A CHEAPO EPRO' — BIG K/April). However I would like to draw your readers' attention to the differences between a 2764 or 27128 and a 2764A and 27128A. The A versions are replacing the ordinary versions from some manufacturers and although totally compatible in read mode, are programmed entirely differently:

1. They are programmed at Vppd 12.5c, VCCd 6.0v
2. They do not use a fixed 50ms pulse.

Instead they use so-called "intelligent" or "adaptive" programming algorithms which apply a 1ms pulse followed by a read/verify cycle. Further 1ms pulses are applied until a correct verify occurs, and then an 'overprogram' pulse of three or four times as long as the total number of 1ms pulses is applied (manufacturers vary in their algorithms). After the complete EPROM is programmed, a verify at Vppd VCCd 5.0v is performed.

The intention of these algorithms is to speed up the programming time and also to ensure that every bit is programmed fully.

The duration of the pulses can total from 4 to 100ms and a fixed 50 ms pulse is NOT permitted — it can corrupt other bits in the same column.

Typically the 2764 will program in one and a half minutes rather than 7 minutes (try doing a 27512 — now available — it could otherwise take 40 minutes!). The net effect of all this is that plugging an 'A' version into 21v will kill it!

Could I suggest a follow-up article to cover a programmer for 'A' versions? The 12.5v and 6v could easily be obtained from the 15v auxiliary power output of the Beeb and the machine-code section of the program modified to follow these intelligent algorithms.

J. F. Cunningham, Takeley, nr. Bishops Stortford

ANDY GREEN writes: these are new chips, as you say, and aren't yet available in retail shops. The 15v power line you mention in the Beeb is in fact 12v, and this would do very nicely as Vpp. Look out for an article on how to convert the BIG K Cheapo Epro to work with 'A' versions soon. For now, use only the 2764 and 27128 versions with the programs.

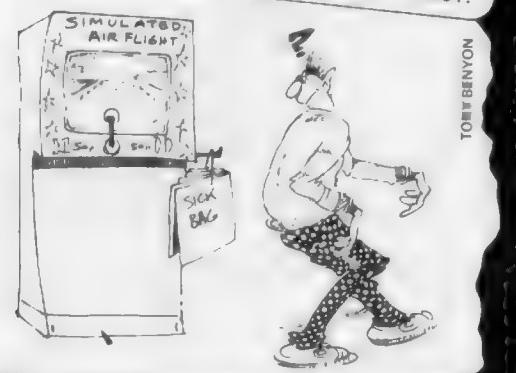
**But Does He Have A Parrot?**

I WAS very interested in Tony Tyler's review of the Atari 800 in Big K 1. To my knowledge, this is the first time a magazine has given this machine a good review other than to praise the graphics and liken it to a video games machine. Can you recommend a good basic manual for the Atari?

Also, I take a Spectrum 48K to sea with me as it is easier to carry than the Atari. No-one on board has had any luck at all with Valhalla. We are getting desperate! Can you offer any clues?

A. C. Lowe, M.S. Esso Tees, Somewhere at Sea.  
The Editor writes: Well, hello, sailor! This question of a decent first-user manual for the Atari machines is a thorny one. There is an excellent expert manual *De Re Atari*, by Chris Crawford — but basic BASIC (as it were) is either incomprehensible, maths-obsessed and boring, or Hi-folks over-the-top chat-show style. On reflection, the latter — *Inside Atari Basic*, by Bill Carriss — is probably the best bet. I learned on it, anyway.

As for Valhalla, none of us here have any clues at all. No doubt somebody out there can weigh in with a tip or two...



TOM BENYON

**Wildly Underrated**

BIG K is excellent — its only faults being its lack of a letters page and the rating system for games. For example, Atic Atac would be wildly underrated at KKK.

Tim Hardy,  
Bishops Stortford.

The problem, Tim old bean, with starting a letters page is that if you haven't been in existence long enough to attract letters you can't print them! As for the Rating System, we felt that too many other magazines use

cumbersome perm-any-three-from-10 grid charts underneath each game — you need a calculator to solve some of these! We use our four-option rating system (don't forget the No K's option) in order to promote good writing from the reviewers. We figure that if the reviewer hasn't told you just what you need to know in his 'copy', then no railway timetable lookalike underneath will make you any wiser. Especially as that, too (when you come down to it) is subjective. What do other readers think?

**MOGUL**

**THE HOTWARE PEOPLE**

# FIRE ANT

*Written by Mike Wacker*

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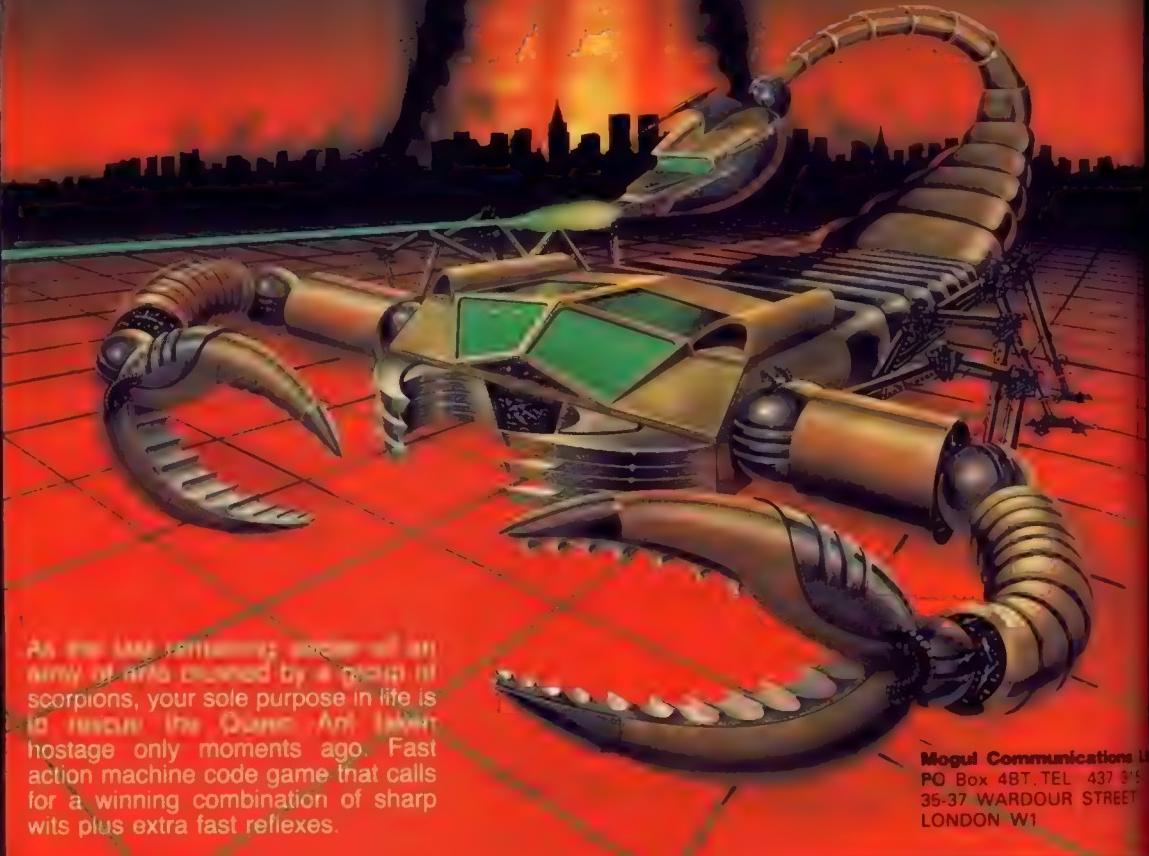
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## MUSIC, MAESTRO, PLEASE Continued

The first machines allowed the sampling of sounds for up to three seconds with a usable bandwidth of frequency of up to 10k. They have recently updated the hardware (called 'voice cards'), and this now means that sampling bandwidth goes up to 16k. As well as being able to sample sounds it is possible to modify and combine sounds by using the operating software. Much of the sound creating process enables the user to change the wave form of a sound with a light pen.

As well as transposing such recorded and created sounds to a keyboard the machine can record up to eight tracks of sequential information and store this in real time when the keyboard is played. Some of this recording can be edited in what is called the 'Page R Mode' and it is this software which affords the musician such fantastic compositional scope.

### Different

All the sounds in a composition can be reprogrammed if required and can be played by a completely different set of sounds. This allows for pretty wild experimentation... as well as this, because the Fairlight has eight output ports each soundtrack can be treated differently on the recording desk, wow... control yourselves; resist the temptation to jump on your Casio...

Now that the sampling of sounds is all the way up to 16k the quality of sound is pretty stunning and at £24,000 plus it's pretty expensive too. But remember, you don't have to buy one (you can hire them). So if you've composed something at home it won't be too long before you can use your micro to operate a Fairlight because they'll soon have MIDI interfaces (you'll probably still need a Fairlight programmer cause they're complex machines).

The next step in the 6809 CPU Fairlight story is going to be the series 3 which will employ 16 bit (as opposed to 8 bit) microprocessors and will be able to operate as 16 track digital tape recorders (as opposed to 8 at present),

also to sample sounds for 2 minutes.

Partly as a result of the introduction of digital synths like PPGs, Fairlights, and Syclaviers, synth programming has become somewhat of an art and many top producers like Trevor Horne and Martin Rushent will not venture into the studio without their programmers. So while traditional skills of musicianship are still very relevant the situation is beginning to change. In the future a combination of musical and programming skills will be needed to make music. This is already evident on the new trendy labels like Trevor Horne's ZTT.

### Combination

MIDI makes possible many more combinations of synths and mixers and thus serious music making will become possible for micro hackers but it still means that you will have to have a rudimentary knowledge of keyboard playing (although other instruments can be used keyboards are still the big favourite).

But what if you can't play? Voice activated music programming is something undergoing a lot of research at the moment, but industry observers reckon that it will be at least 3-4 years before you'll be able to hum a tune into a micro-synth system and have it played with the sounds of your choice!

Sound data bases might soon be available and it looks like the price of Emulator type technology seems sure to come down within the next few years.

A lot of software for writing music on popular micro's (using a keyboard) will have to be written and a lot more MIDI compatible hardware should be coming onto the market. Meanwhile, hack on... and if you've got some related progs, send them in.

P.S. I would like to thank Phil Nicholas for his help in preparing this article.

For information about products mentioned in this article, write to 'Q' at:  
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# NEXT MONTH IN BIG K...

## YOU CAN'T DO THIS WITH BASIC...

TV effects machines such as the Quantel Paintbox are of such high definition that 1 MB of RAM is needed to store a single frame. We check out Quantel and other gadgets in a special report.

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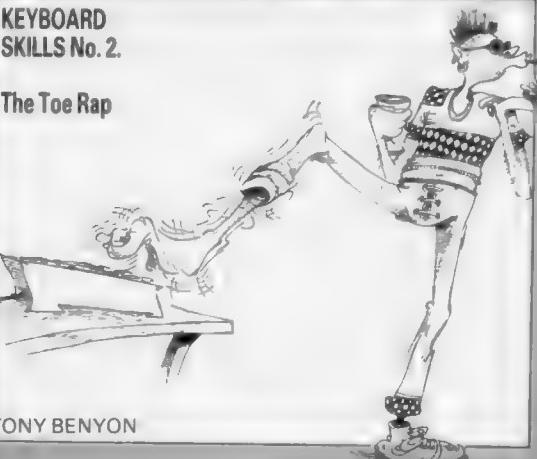
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TONY BENYON

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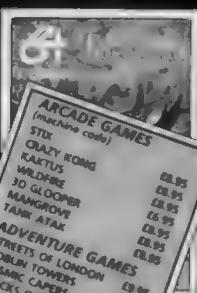
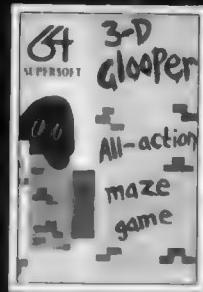
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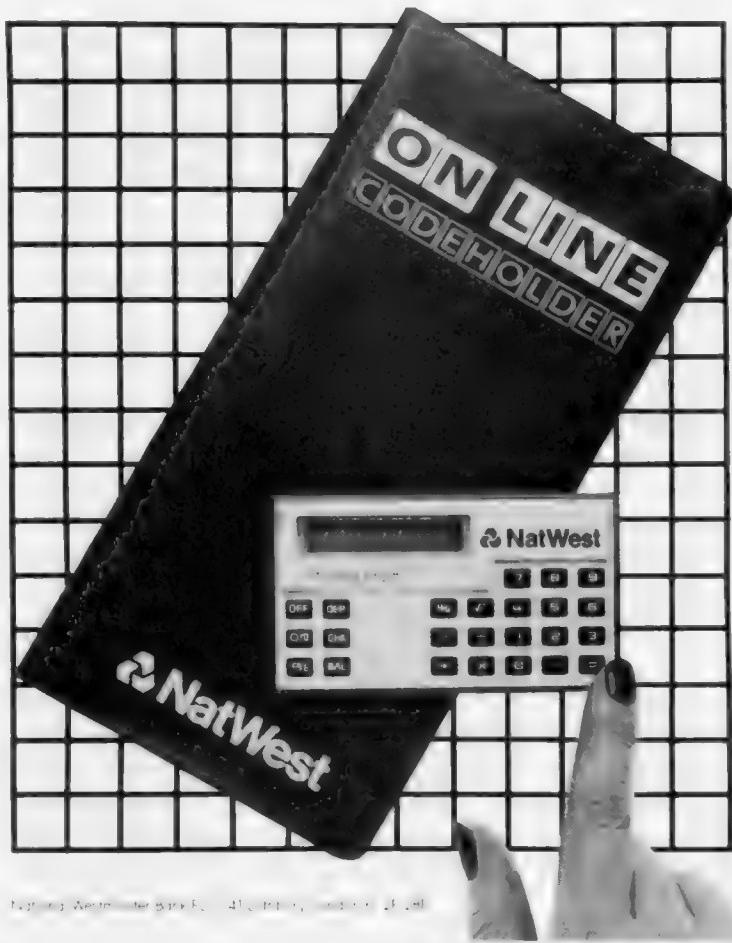
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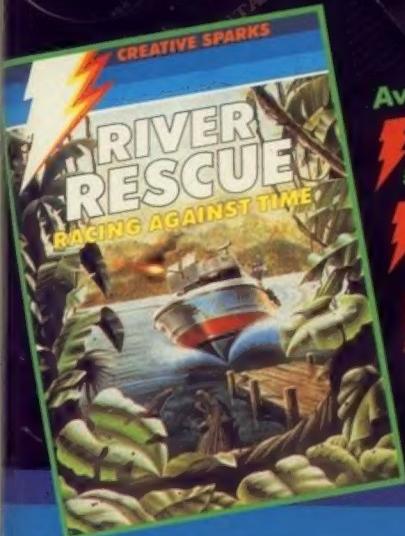
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Anirog .....	47	Postern .....	81
Atari .....	16/17	Romik .....	87
Audiogenic .....	Cov. 2	Salamander .....	21
Automata .....	32	Silica .....	71
Cascade .....	43	Simonsoft .....	51
Cheetah .....	55	Sinclair Research .....	23
Creative Sparks .....	95	Soft Machine .....	43
Discount Soft .....	57	Software Index .....	4
Duckworth .....	92	Software Invasion .....	74
Filesixty .....	86	Supersoft .....	93
Imagine .....	2	System 3 .....	79
Incentive .....	5	Thor .....	9, 31
Interceptor .....	Cov. 4	Ultimate .....	80
K-Tel .....	7	Vic Oddens .....	30
Lothlorien .....	33	Video Force .....	.96
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